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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

5 FABULOUS GARDENS from around the world

Planting & design trends

What the experts are up to this year

THE BEST HARDY ORCHIDS to grow outdoors

GARDEN HISTORY

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editor's letter

GARDEN PUBLICATION OF THE YEAR
Garden Media Guild
Awards
WINNER 2014

Readers often ask if I visit all of the gardens that we feature in GARDENS ILLUSTRATED. Oh, if only that were the case! While I get to see hundreds of photographic images of gardens, most of my time is spent in our offices in Bristol. Not that I'm complaining and I was very fortunate to visit two extraordinary gardens in this issue: the Tokachi Millennium Forest (TMF) in Hokkaido, Japan, and Stavordale Priory in Somerset, England. In many respects these gardens are completely different, yet both celebrate the beauty of plants, cleverly put together with high levels of horticultural expertise. Good gardeners are always crucial to the ongoing success of any project and this month we profile the talented Midori Shintani, head gardener at TMF and Tom Longridge of Beningbrough Hall. We also look at the history of women in garden design and interview some of today's leading lights. I am thrilled to announce that Penelope Hobhouse, Jinny Blom and Sarah Price have just agreed to speak at our Talk on Tuesday 19 May about their experiences as designers (visit gardensillustrated.com for details or to book call 0871 230 7156*). And don't forget we also have an outstanding line-up of speakers at our first GARDENS ILLUSTRATED Festival on 17-18 April in Malmesbury (see page 10). Finally, at the recent Garden Media Guild Awards, the team and I were delighted to win the highly coveted accolade for Best Garden Publication of the year. I hope you enjoy the issue. Wishing you happy and successful gardening for 2015.

Juliet

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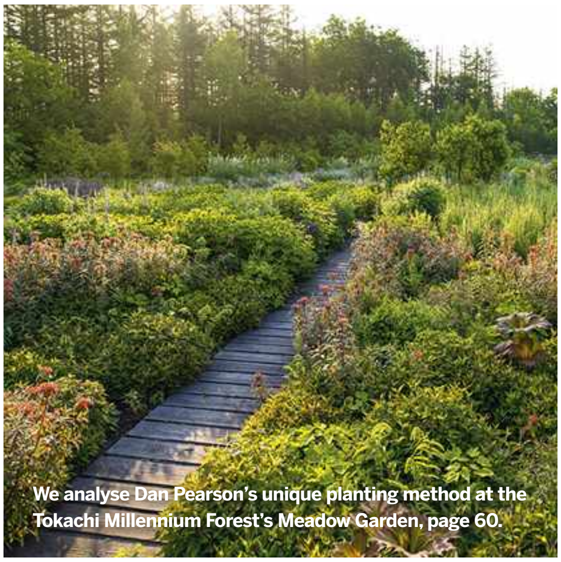

We analyse Dan Pearson's unique planting method at the Tokachi Millennium Forest's Meadow Garden, page 60.

Gertrude Jekyll was highly influential and helped pave the way for women garden designers today, page 76.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

FERGUS GARRETT
Plantsman and head gardener at Great Dixter in East Sussex.

CAROL KLEIN
Plantswoman and presenter of BBC *Gardeners' World*.

DANIEL J HINKLEY
American plantsman, planthunter, horticultural writer and lecturer.

ALYS FOWLER
Kew-trained gardener, author and television presenter.

DAN PEARSON
Garden designer, plantsman and columnist.

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50% off course page 105

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Stavordale Priory
in Somerset
Photography by
Jason Ingram

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82 **Mixing it up** Stephanie Mills's garden at Laguna Ranch, overlooking the Pacific Ocean in Santa Cruz, is a mix of English cottage plants, prairie grasses, olive trees and succulents

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76 **Women in garden design** Why aren't more of the world's high-profile garden designers women,

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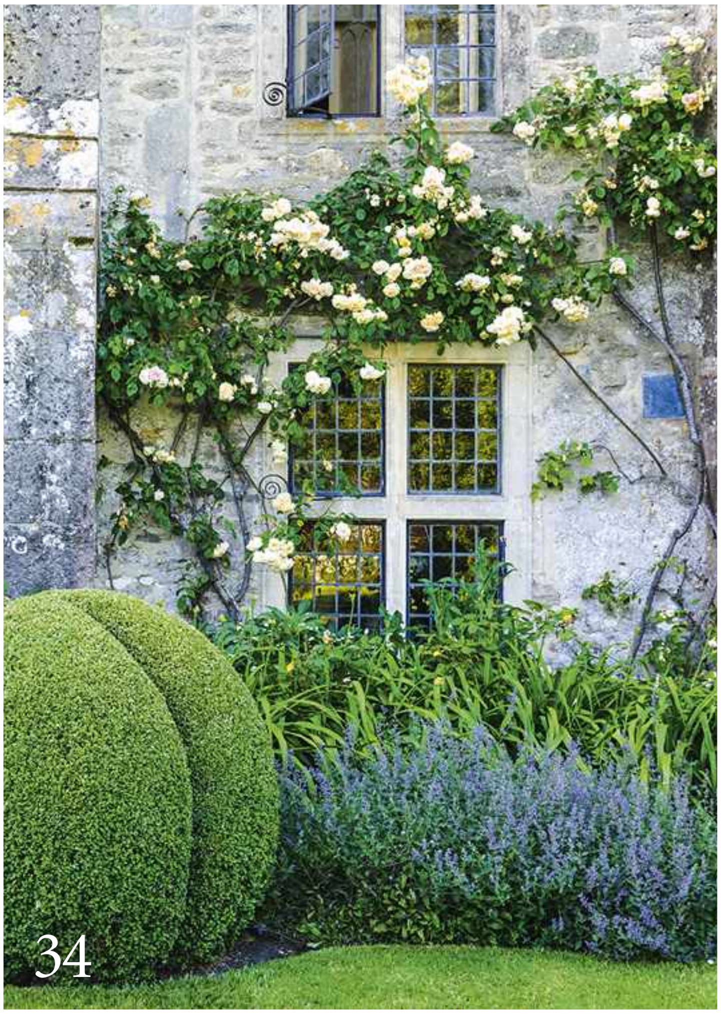
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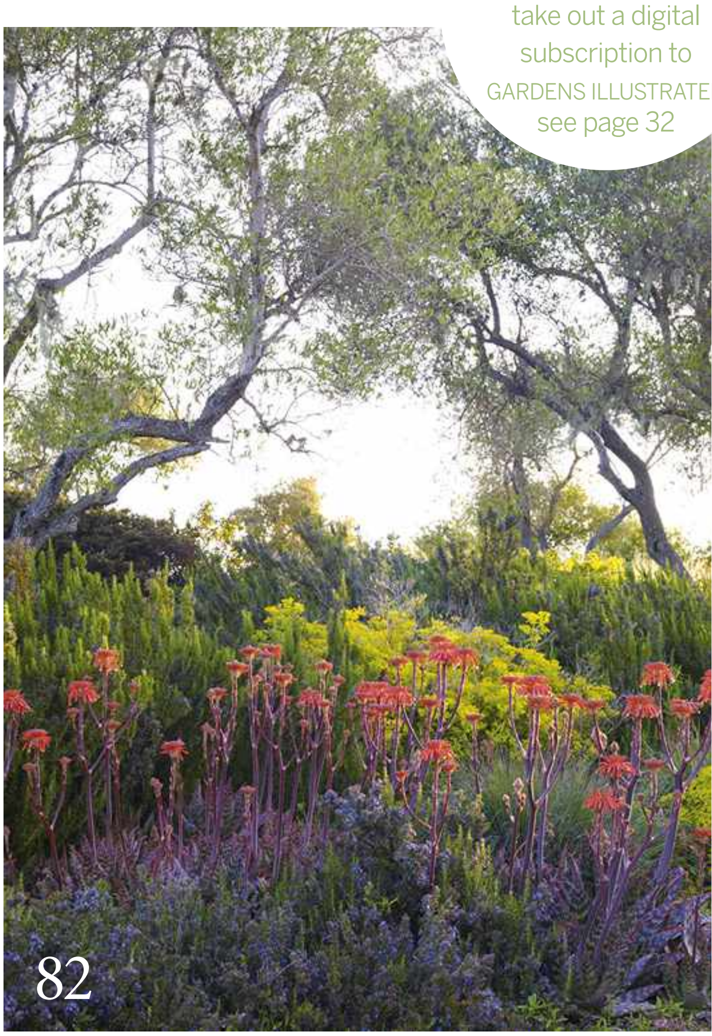
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asks Ambra Edwards, who also looks at the rise of women through garden history
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- Receive **free postage** on selected Sarah Raven collections – see page 104 – and the chance to **save 50%** on selected courses at The English Gardening School – see page 105

- Save money when you subscribe to the digital edition – see page 32

LE SCANFF-MAYER, SHOGO OIZUMI, JASON INGRAM, MARION BRENNER

contributors

MATT BIGGS

Matt is a gardener, writer and broadcaster as well as a panel member on BBC Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time*. He is currently working on a garden on Hertfordshire clay that has a woodland area with hardy orchids. Read his profile on these plants on page 50.

"It's great to think that with current developments in breeding, hardy orchids could be the next 'must-have' garden plant."

SUSAN HEEGER

Based in Los Angeles, journalist and author Susan this month travels north to Stephanie Mills's ocean-view garden in Santa Cruz (page 82) and south to artist Suzy Schaefer's spectacular garden in Rancho Santa Fe (page 70) to explore their very personal garden visions in a dry climate.

"As a native Californian, I'm fascinated by how differently gardeners interpret the diverse landscape and climate of the state."

RICHARD BLOOM

Born into a gardening family, Richard was surrounded by plants from an early age, so it was no surprise he went on to pursue garden photography. Today his work appears in UK and foreign garden and lifestyle magazines. He shot Suzy Schaefer's garden on page 70.

"Suzy's garden was a wonder to behold – a slightly surreal and bejewelled succulent heaven."

MARION BRENNER

Marion's photographs of gardens have featured in books and magazines worldwide. She enjoys turning compost and keeping chickens in Berkeley, California, but her greatest pleasure is photographing other people's gardens, including that of Stephanie Mills – see page 82.

"I was enchanted by the colour, textures and play of light in the series of magical gardens on the ridge above the Pacific."

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USA/CANADA GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, PO BOX 37495, Boone, IA 50037-0495 USA.

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

☎ | +44 (0)117 933 8072 🖱 | laura.stanley@immediate.co.uk

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES

☎ | +44 (0)117 314 7440 🖱 | gardens@gardensillustrated.com

✉ | GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN.

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APP SUPPORT

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MAGAZINE CONTACTS

EDITORIAL

Editor	Juliet Roberts
Contributing editors	Alys Fowler, Fergus Garrett, Daniel J Hinkley, Carol Klein and Dan Pearson
Art director	David Grenham
Deputy editor	Sorrel Everton
Deputy art editor	Niki Goss
Production editor	Juliet Giles
Botanical adviser	Dr James Compton
Thanks this issue	Chris Jones, Rosanna Morris, Marc O'Neill and Dave Partridge

ADVERTISING

Advertising manager	Laura Stanley **0117 933 8072** laura.stanley@immediate.co.uk
Classified sales executive	Sally Overton **0117 314 7408** sally.overton@immediate.co.uk
USA advertising representative	Kate Buckley buckley@buckleypell.com
Advertising designer	Matt Gynn

INSERTS

Laurence Robertson	**+353 (0)876 902208**

CIRCULATION, MARKETING, PRESS & PR

Newstrade manager	Rob Brock
Subscriptions Director	Jacky Perales-Morris
Direct Marketing Manager	Aimee Rhymer
Press officer	Carolyn Wray **0117 314 8812**

MANAGEMENT

Chairman	Stephen Alexander
Chief executive officer	Tom Bureau
Managing director, Bristol	Andy Marshall
Associate Publisher	Marie Davies

SYNDICATION AND LICENSING

Director of licensing and syndication	Tim Hudson

PRODUCTION

Production director	Sarah Powell
Production co-ordinator	Emily Mounter

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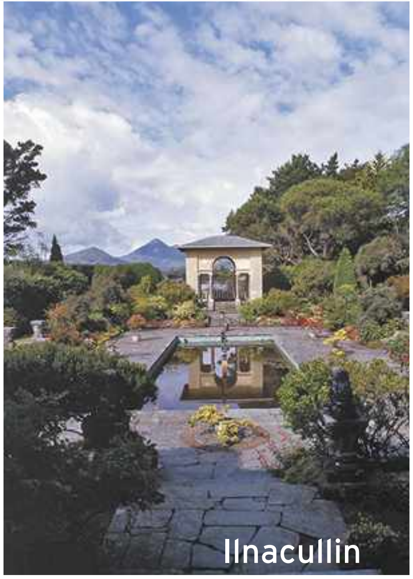
Tresco's Abbey Gardens

Malvern style



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RHS Harlow Carr

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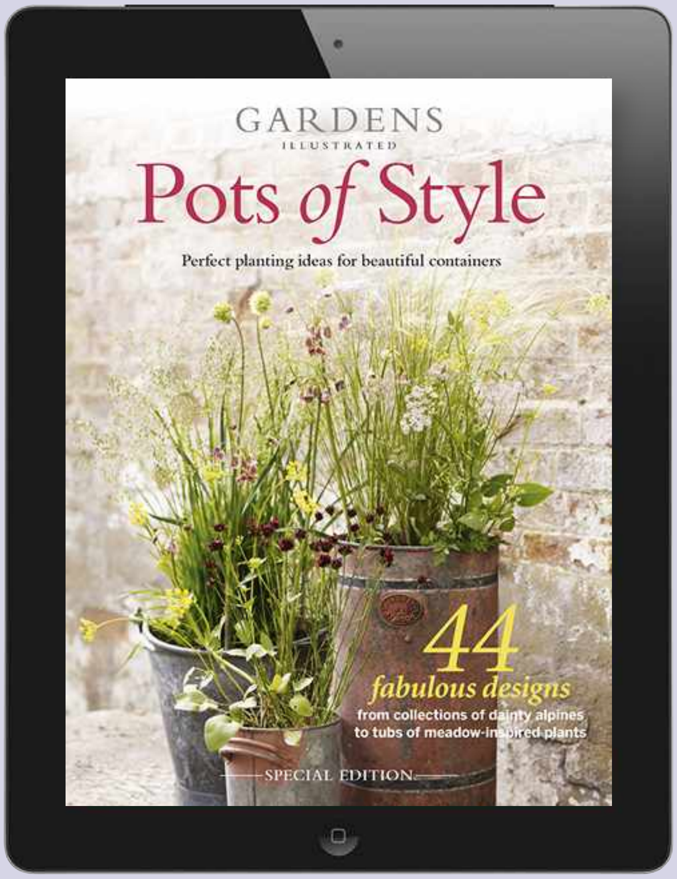

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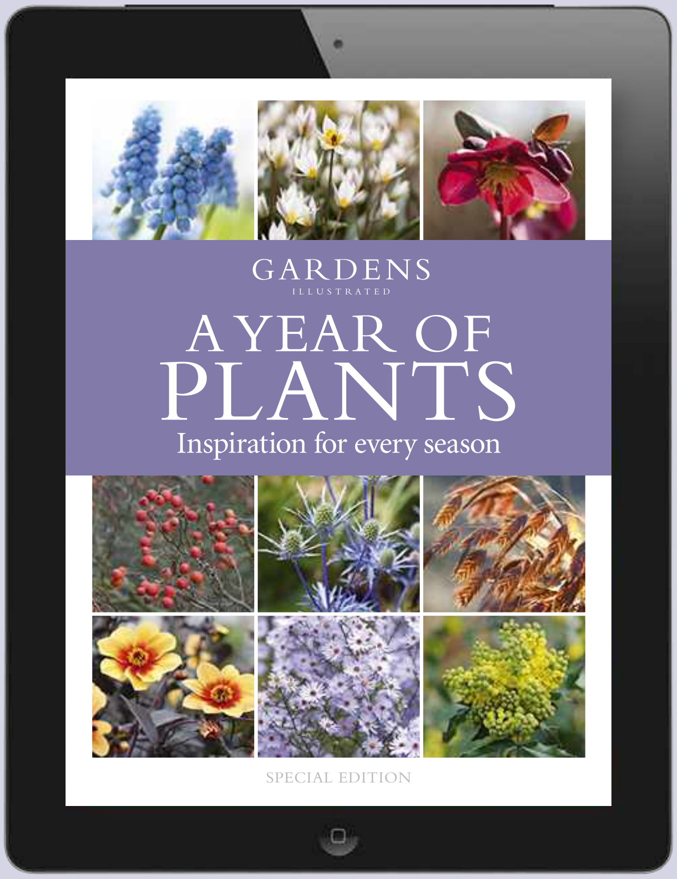

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Exclusive Reader Events 2015

Devon Gardens Reader Holiday
28 June – 1 July 2015 – see below

Gardens Illustrated Festival
17-18 April 2015 – page 10

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DR NOËL KINGSBURY is an expert in perennials and planting schemes. He has written numerous books, and is both a regular lecturer and a planting designer himself.

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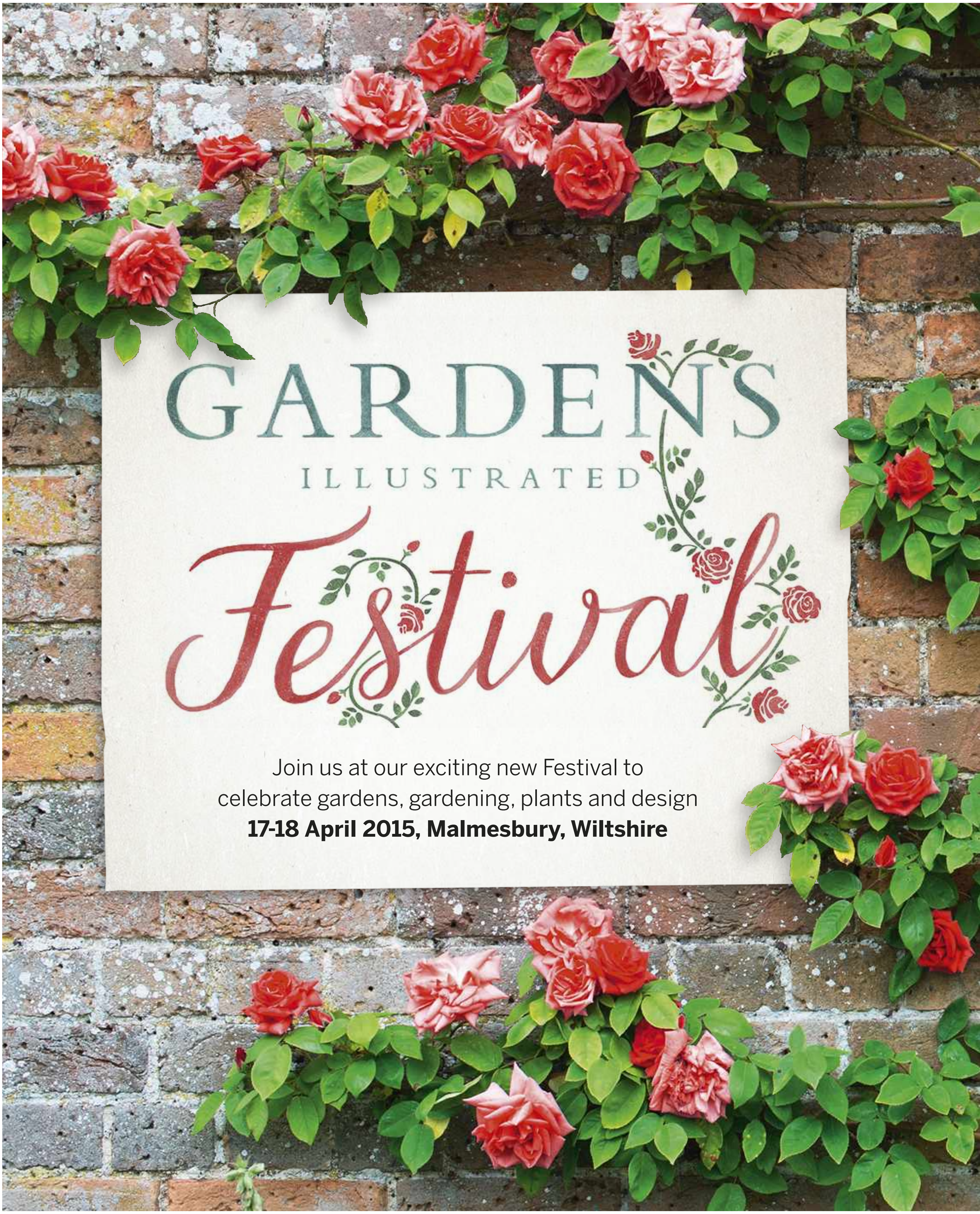

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 Sarah Raven The Home Cutting Garden 2-3pm	 **James Alexander-Sinclair** Dancing in Borders 2-3pm	 **Jason Ingram** Gardens Through the Lens 2-3pm
 Anna Pavord The Flowering of Tuscany 4-5pm	 **Rachel Dein** The Ultimate in Pressed Flowers 4-5pm	 **Noël Kingsbury** Travels with NK 4-5pm
	 Tom Mitchell The Modern Day Plant Hunter 5.30-6.30pm	 **Frank Ronan** The Invisible Garden 5.30-6.30pm

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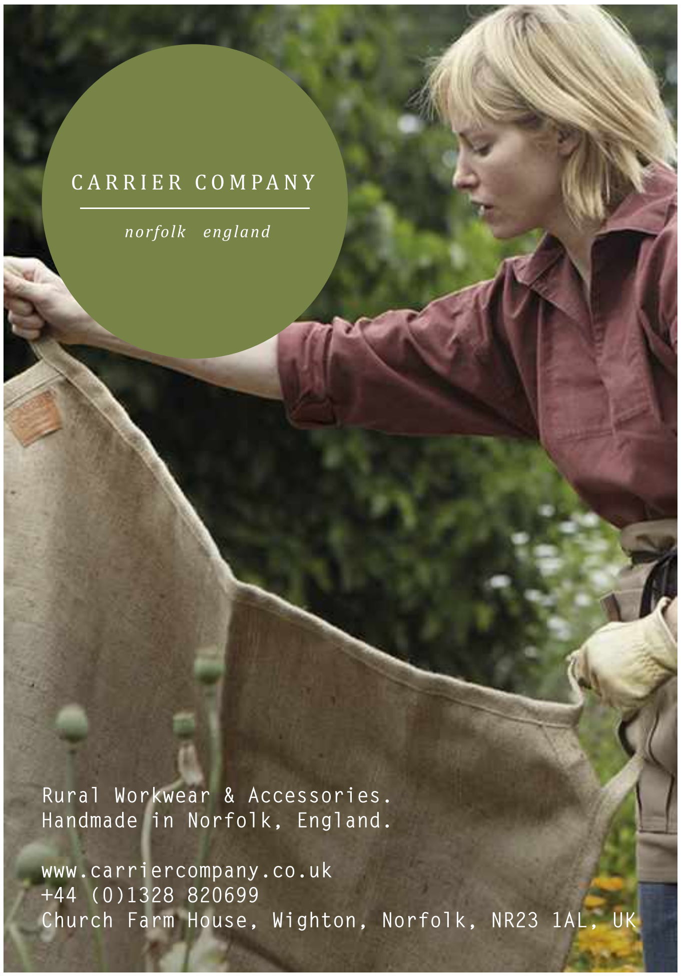
LECTURE SERIES

Winter wondering

Landscape architect Kim Wilkie, whose designs at Shawford (pictured) provide the perfect setting for the Antony Gormley sculpture *Watcher*, will deliver the first of the University of Oxford Botanic Garden Winter Lecture Series. In his talk on 29 January, he will discuss how landscape itself can become an inhabited work of art. The series continues with John Grimshaw, director of the Yorkshire Arboretum (12 February), Professor Kathy Willis, director of science at Kew (26 February), Jill Raggett, botanist at Writtle College (12 March) and garden writer Ursula Buchan asking 'Did we really dig for victory?' (26 March). Tickets are £12, or £54 for all five lectures. Said Business School, Egrove Park, Kennington Road, Kennington, Oxford OX1 5NY. **Tel 01865 286690, www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk**



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2015: 31 May, 5 July, 6 Sep

LAKES COMO AND MAGGIORE
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2015: 12 May, 16 Jun, 7 Jul, 8 Sep

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Belles of the winter ball

Hellebore expert Herts Hellebores begins its plant sales in January with orders taken via its website. This small specialist nursery develops its own new cultivars, particularly anemone-centred and small-flowered hybrids in a range of rich colours, offering gardeners real gems chosen for their individual character. The nursery in Ware, Hertfordshire holds open days in February and March on Saturdays and Wednesdays. For orders **tel 01920 438458, herts-hellebore.co.uk**

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Garden shows and festivals 2015

MARCH

20 **Keukenhof**, the Netherlands (until 17 May). Artful bulb displays. keukenhof.nl

28-29 **Great Dixter Spring Plant Fair**, UK. International specialist nurseries. greatdixter.co.uk

28-29 **Cornwall Spring Flower Show**, UK. Early spring displays. cornwallgardensociety.org.uk

APRIL

11-12 **Les Fête des Plantes de Saint-Jean de Beauregard**, France. Europe's finest nurseries. domsaintjeanbeauregard.com

17-18 **GARDENS ILLUSTRATED Festival**, UK. Our new event with speakers and gardening stalls. gardensfestival.com

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED Festival

23-26 **Harrogate Flower Show (Spring)**, UK. Celebrating spring planting. (Another show in autumn). flowershow.org.uk

26 **Spring Plants & Gardens Fair**, Garden Museum, UK. Plant sales. gardenmuseum.org.uk

MAY

8-10 **Beervelde Garden Days**, Belgium. Plants and accessories. parkvanbeervelde.be

15-17 **Les Journées des Plantes**, France. Moves from Courson to Chantilly. domainedechantilly.com

19-23 **RHS Chelsea Flower Show**, UK. The UK's premier garden event. rhs.org.uk

29-31 **Gardening Scotland**, UK. Inspiration for Scottish gardeners. gardeningscotland.com

29-31 **Holker Garden Festival**, UK. Gardens, countryside and crafts. holkerfestival.co.uk

JUNE

5-6 **Bowood House Gardening Festival**, UK. Toby Buckland's new event. tobygardenfest.co.uk

19-21 **Grow London**, UK. Contemporary garden show. growlondon.com

19-21 **Bingerden International Specialist Nursery Days**, the Netherlands. International nurseries. bingerden.com

GROW London

28 – 1 July **Bloom**, Ireland. The largest garden festival in Ireland. bloominthepark.com

30 – 5 July **RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show**, UK. Show gardens and plants. rhs.org.uk

SEPTEMBER

8-13 **RHS Wisley Flower Show**, UK. Top nurseries. rhs.org.uk

8-21 **Arketipos**, Italy. International garden and landscape design event. arketipos.org

11-13 **London Flower Show**, UK. New event: plants and show gardens. londonflowershow.co.uk

25-27 **Les Fête des Plantes de Saint-Jean de Beauregard**, France. Autumn show with Europe's finest plantspeople. domsaintjeanbeauregard.com

26-27 **Malvern Autumn Show**, UK. Autumn planting. rhs.org.uk

OCTOBER

3-4 **Great Dixter Autumn Plant Fair**, UK. International nurseries. greatdixter.co.uk

2-4 **Orticolario**, Italy. Garden festival on shores of Lake Como. orticolario.it

9-11 **Beervelde Garden Days**, Belgium. Plants and accessories. parkvanbeervelde.be

16-18 **Les Journées des Plantes**, France. Autumn event in new setting at Chantilly. domainedechantilly.com

- This is just a selection of events for 2015. See local press for other events and RHS for full shows list. Check all details before travelling.

Seen any slowworms?

Count feathered visitors.

HOME HELP

RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch

It's time again for the RSPB's annual Big Garden Birdwatch (24-25 January), which helps chart population numbers of our common garden birds. Birdwatchers are also asked to record other wildlife they've spotted (at any time of year) in their gardens or local green spaces, including badgers, hedgehogs, deer and foxes, and this year the RSPB has added grass snakes and slowworms to the list. These details will then be shared with other conservation groups. Full details and counting charts available at **rspb.org.uk**

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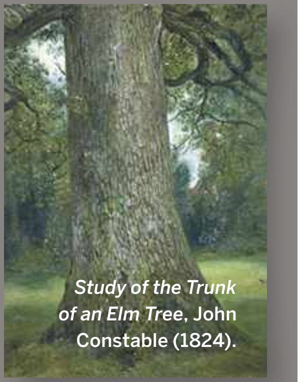
PLANNING

Garden diaries

Keep a record of your planting in a garden diary. Our favourites include: *Great Dixter Diary*, with advice from the late Christopher Lloyd and garden images (£12.50, greatdixter.com); Avon Bulbs' *Five Year Diary*, with tips on seasonal tasks (£15, avonbulbs.co.uk); and *RHS Gardener's Five Year Record Book*, with botanical illustrations (£14.99, rhsshop.co.uk).

GREAT DIXTER DIARY
A GARDENER'S FIVE YEAR RECORD BOOK
Five Year Diary

Diary


Study of the Trunk of an Elm Tree, John Constable (1824).

- **V&A Constable exhibition**

Final days of Constable exhibition *The Making of a Master*, looking at the influence and legacy of Constable's evocation of nature and landscape. Ends 11 January. Full details at **020 7942 2000, vam.ac.uk**

- **Savill Garden free entry**

Enjoy winter colour in the garden and Temperate House. Free entry to the gardens during December, January and February. Open daily 10am-4.30pm. (Closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day) Savill Garden, Windsor Great Park, Wick Lane, Englefield Green, Surrey TW20 0UU. **Tel 01784 435544. theroyallandscape.co.uk**

- **Snowdrop sale**

Sale of rare and unusual snowdrops at Myddelton House, home of the famous plantsman and snowdrop expert EA Bowles. 24 January, 10.30am-12noon, £3.50. Myddelton House Gardens, Bulls Cross, Enfield, Middlesex EN2 9HG. **Tel 08456 770 600, visitleevalley.org.uk**

- **Talk – Past, Present and Future in a City Garden**

Hosted by the Kew Mutual Improvement Society, Andrea Brunsendorf, head gardener Inner Temple Garden, talks about her work in this historic city garden. 26 January, 6pm, £2. Jodrell Lecture Theatre, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Surrey TW9 3AB. **Tel 020 8332 5000, kew.org/kmis**

- **Tree planting masterclass**

A look at the specifics of successful tree planting from site preparation to formative pruning with arboretum curator. 29 January, 10am-12.30pm or 1.30-4pm, £30. Harcourt Arboretum, Oxford Lodge, Peacock Gate, Oxford OX44 9PX. **Tel 01865 343501, www.harcourt-arboretum.ox.ac.uk**

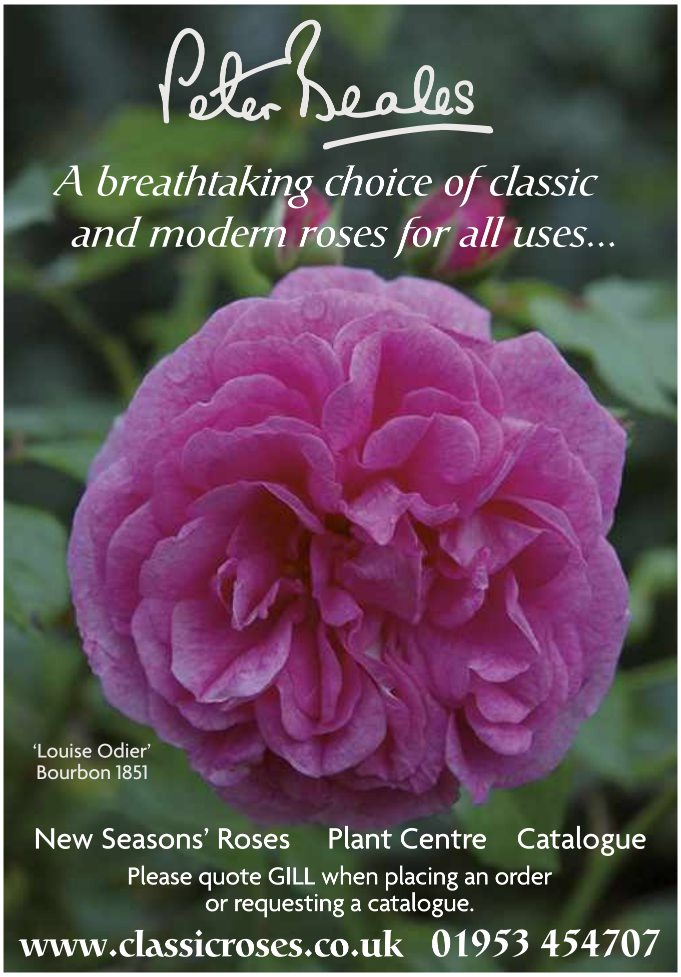
- **Nature's Beloved Son: Rediscovering John Muir's Botanical Legacy**

A major new exhibition celebrating the life of John Muir, the Scottish-American naturalist and author, who 100 years after his death is still remembered for his understanding of the need to preserve wilderness. Until 25 January, free. John Hope Gateway, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, 20A Inverleith Row Edinburgh EH3 5LR. **Tel 0131 552 7171, rbge.org.uk**

- **How to get the best out of your greenhouse or polytunnel**

Day course with advice and demonstrations to help you get the most out of growing crops or flowers year-round in these increasingly popular additions to the garden. 31 January, 10.30am-3.30pm, £50. Waterperry Gardens, Nr Wheatley, Oxfordshire OX33 1JZ. **Tel 01844 339254, waterperrygardens.co.uk**

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON



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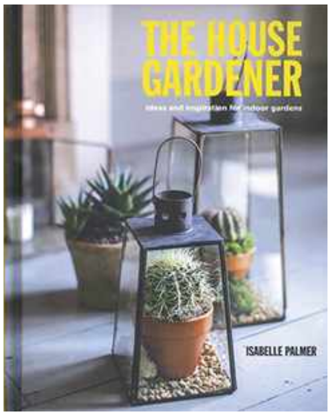
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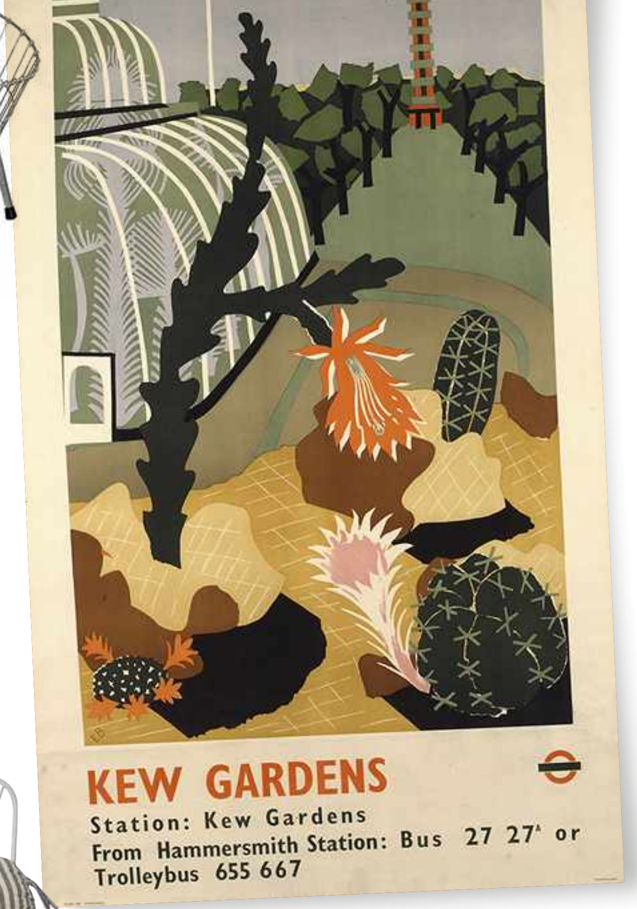
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'Kew Gardens' by Edward Bawden (1939) vintage poster print, from £9.95 for A4, 0800 952 0089, ltmuseumshop.co.uk

Glazed terracotta 'tenderling pot', £3, 00800 0026 8476, anthropologie.eu

Palm Springs white metal chair, £250, 020 7820 0010, rajtentclubshop.com

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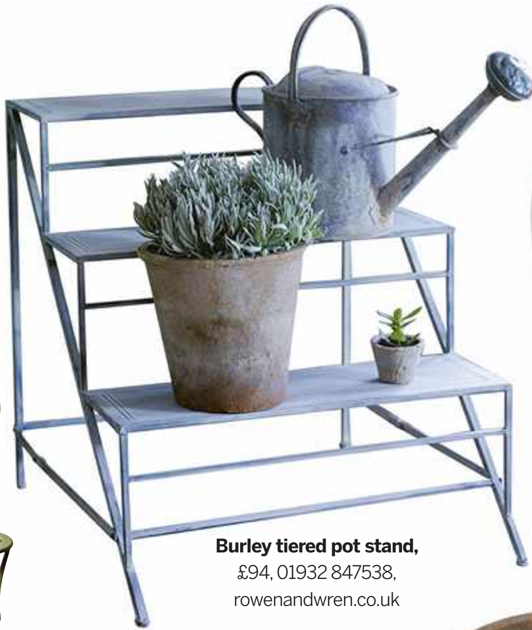

Burley tiered pot stand, £94, 01932 847538, rowenandwren.co.uk

Hanging plant shade, £15.50, 020 7431 5553, thebalconygardener.com

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Sola brass wall planter, from £42, 01932 847538, rowenandwren.co.uk

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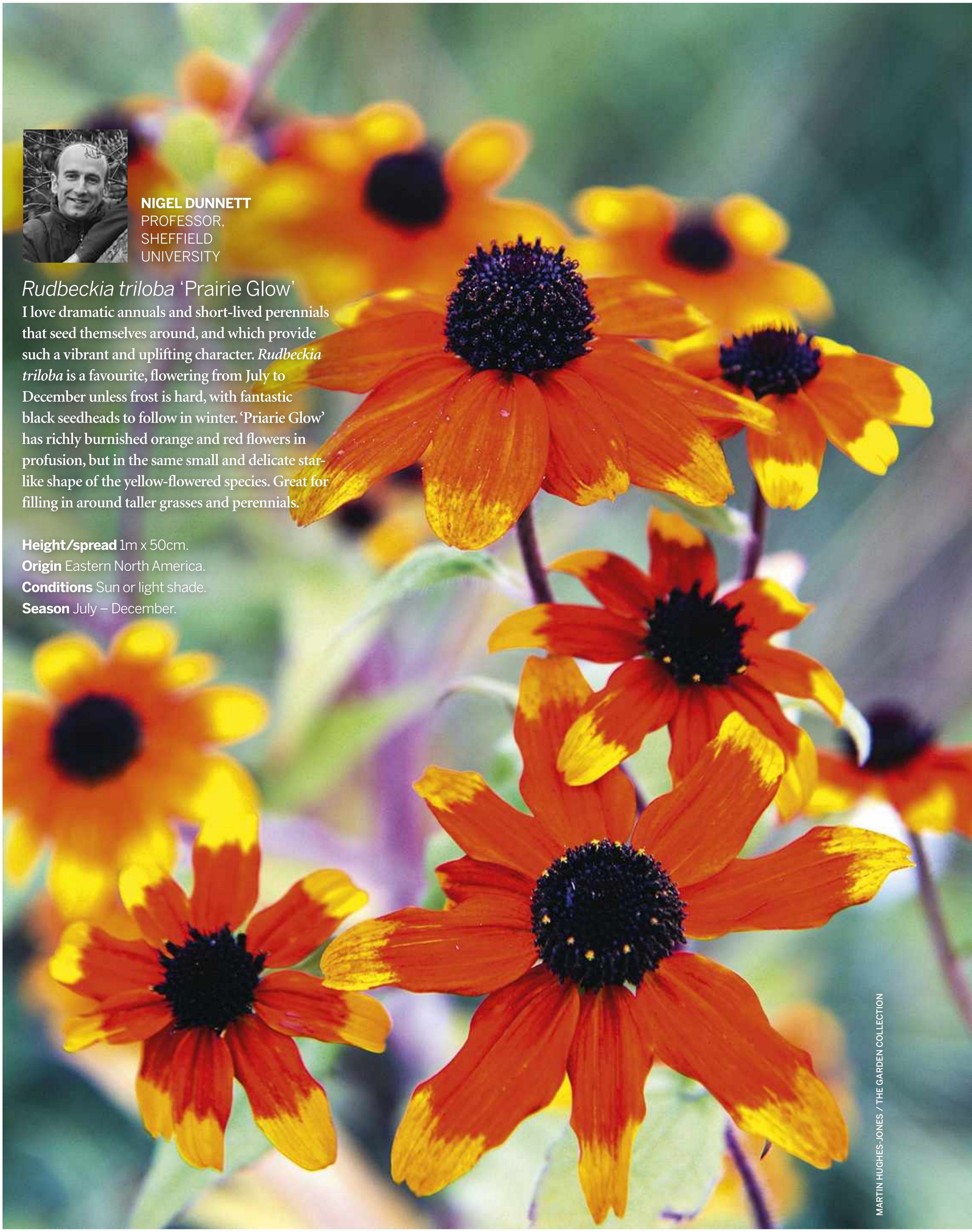


NIGEL DUNNETT
PROFESSOR,
SHEFFIELD
UNIVERSITY

Rudbeckia triloba 'Prairie Glow'

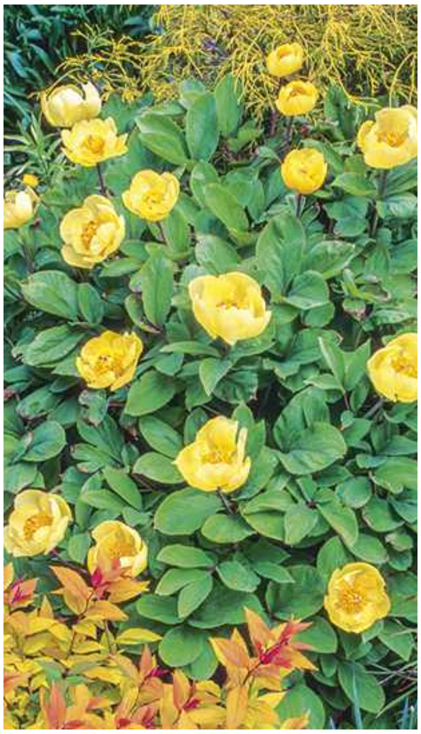
I love dramatic annuals and short-lived perennials that seed themselves around, and which provide such a vibrant and uplifting character. *Rudbeckia triloba* is a favourite, flowering from July to December unless frost is hard, with fantastic black seedheads to follow in winter. 'Priarie Glow' has richly burnished orange and red flowers in profusion, but in the same small and delicate star-like shape of the yellow-flowered species. Great for filling in around taller grasses and perennials.

Height/spread 1m x 50cm.
Origin Eastern North America.
Conditions Sun or light shade.
Season July – December.

MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / THE GARDEN COLLECTION

Top plants for 2015

Here's what a selection of plant experts will be growing in their gardens this year. There are ten choices of varied interest and garden appeal. Which will you grow?



JOHN GLOVER / ALAMY

TROY SCOTT SMITH
HEAD GARDENER
SISSINGHURST

Paeonia mlokosewitschii

From the gentle burn of spring to the roar of summer and beyond, no other plant typifies the intoxicating exuberance of early summer more. Described by Christopher Lloyd, 'at its ravishing best for four hours', the brief but glorious moment of flowering is like a tidal wave that floods through the garden. Its delicate appearance reveals nothing of its hardiness.

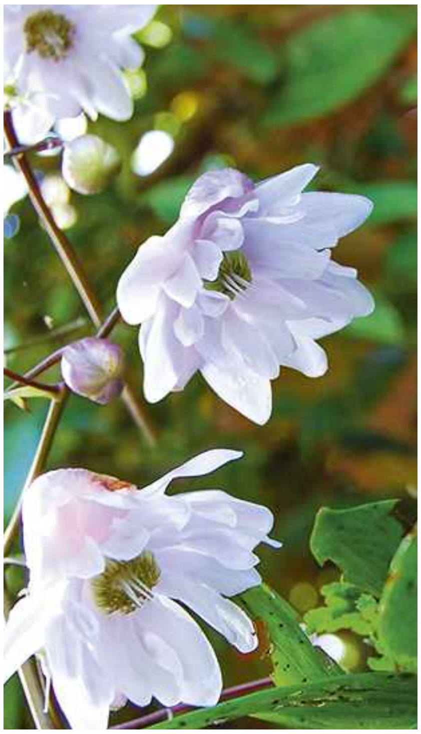
Height/spread 60cm x 80cm.
Origin Caucasus.
Conditions Any good soil with added organic matter.
Season Flowering in May – June.

LOUISA ARBUTHNOTT
STONE HOUSE COTTAGE
GARDEN AND NURSERY

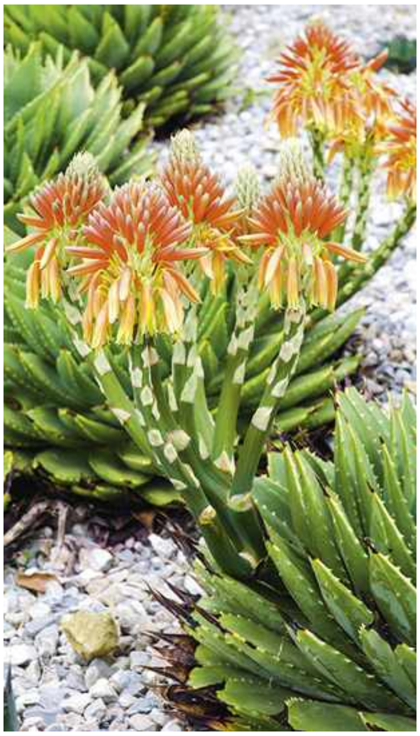
Anemonopsis macrophylla 'Yuzawa Engei'

A star performer last August, when many shade lovers were over. This new double form has an extra row of petals but the same waxy lilac flowers with darker centres and likes the same damp woodland conditions as the single form. The nodding flowers are quite large and borne on arching stems and it has attractive divided ferny foliage with a hint of bronze in the spring.

Height 60cm.
Origins Japanese island of Honshu.
Conditions Moist shady spot.
Season August.



JASON INGRAM



MMGI / HEATHER EDWARDS

HELEN DILLON
DUBLIN GARDEN
OWNER, WRITER AND
BROADCASTER

Aloe polyphylla

I was excited when I realised my plant had flower buds after two winters outdoors. But when I discovered that it comes from the Drakensberg mountains, it made sense. Although the area is close to the equator, its high altitude, summer rainfall and dry winters create growing conditions it's relatively easy to replicate in Dublin. Mine lives on a well-drained, sunny raised bed covered by a sheet of glass in winter.

Height/spread 50cm (in flower) x 40cm.
Origins Lesotho.
Conditions Sun, good drainage.
Season Flowers late spring; leaves all year.

JAN SMITH / GAP PHOTOS

MICK EVANS
HEAD GARDENER
PACKWOOD HOUSE

Fuchsia magellanica 'Lady Bacon'

In full flower it drips with the most elegant, pale flowers. Slender, white sepals encircle a violet corolla and are set off by long, tapering, reddish-pink tubes and stamens. I'm looking forward to experimenting with it in my new shrubbery plantings, where I think the flowers will appear luminescent in partial shade.

Height 1.5m.
Origin Chile.
Conditions Sun or partial shade. Hardy in a sheltered spot.
Seasons July – September.

DAN HINKLEY
US PLANTSMAN AND
PLANT HUNTER

Holboellia brachyandra

I grow numerous species of the twining *Holboellia* evergreen vine throughout my garden. Of the lot, the best and certainly most exciting is *Holboellia brachyandra*, which I collected in 2003 in Vietnam. It has moderate vigour with leathery leaves and clusters of large, white flowers held by red pedicels in spring followed by enormous and edible fruit.

Height clambering up to 5m.
Origins Northern Vietnam.
Conditions Light shade or full sun in humus-rich soil.
Season April – May for flowers.

ANDREA JONES / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES

GARDEN WORLD IMAGES

MATTHEW REESE
HEAD GARDENER

Geranium 'Tiny Monster'

In mid November this plucky geranium, a hybrid of *G. sanguinium* and *G. psilostemon*, is still in flower. Even when the border is in full stride I am still drawn to it as it gently flings itself through neighbouring plants. Put it with blues to really turn on the magenta flowers.

Height/spread 60cm x 70cm.
Origin Hybrid from German breeder Rolf Offnthal c1999.
Conditions. Any good garden soil, not too wet. Full sun to semi-shade.
Season May – November.

Useful information

Details on how to find the plants chosen by our plantspeople this year – and more about their work

For suppliers of each of these plants you are best to check the **RHS Plant Finder or the website apps.rhs.org.uk/horticulturaldatabase/index.asp**

Alternatively, many of the plantspeople featured also have nurseries, so it is always worth trying these, or visiting the gardens they work in.

Please note that stocks of some of the newer plant cultivars may be limited.

Helen Dillon's Dublin garden

COURTESY OF HELEN DILLON

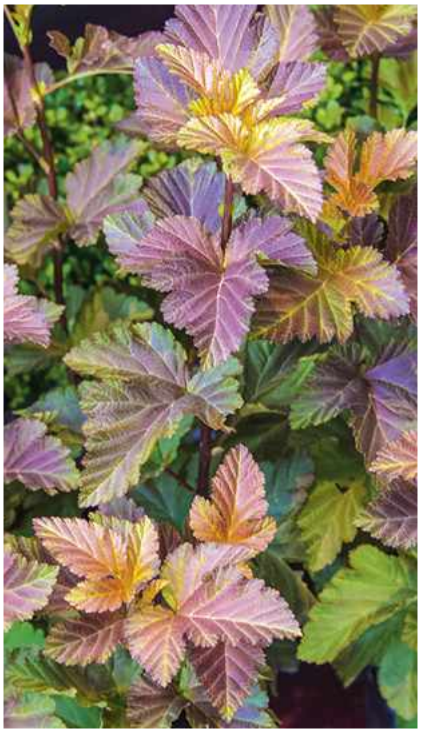
- **Barnsdale Gardens**
  Barnsdale Gardens, The Avenue, Exton, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8AH.
  Tel 01572 813 200, barnsdalegardens.co.uk
- **Dan Hinkley**
  Find out more about Dan's work including lecture appearances at: danieljhinkley.com
- **The Dillon Garden**
  45 Sandford Terrace, just off Sandford Road, Ranelagh,

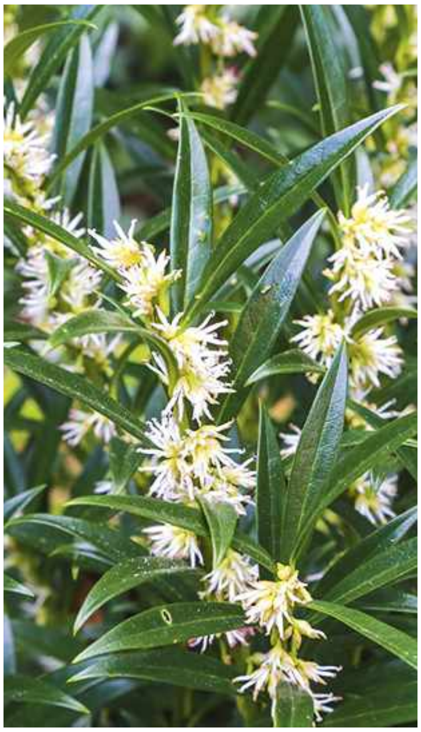
GRAHAM RICE
GARDEN WRITER AND
PLANT EXPERT

Physocarpus opulifolius Amber Jubilee (= 'Jefam')

The early season foliage in red, amber, orange and gold tones creates a unique spring feature that combines warmth and sparkle. There are clusters of white flowers in summer, black berries later and then purple autumn leaf colour. All on one of the hardiest plants you can buy.

Height/spread 1.5m x 1.5m.
Origins Cross of 'Diabolo' and 'Dart's Gold'.
Conditions Any reasonable soil in sun or a little shade.
Season April – June (foliage); July (flowers); September – October (foliage and fruits).


OSCAR D'ARCY / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES


JASON INGRAM

ANDREW McINDOE
MANAGING DIRECTOR
HILLER NURSERIES

Sarcococca hookeriana 'Ghorepani'

A superb new variety of Christmas box with slender, shining, deep-green leaves on upright stems. The small, white flowers with red stamens appear in March after other sarcococcas have faded; their fragrance is sweet, strong and delicious. A wonderful shrub for shady borders, small town gardens and under the shade of trees.

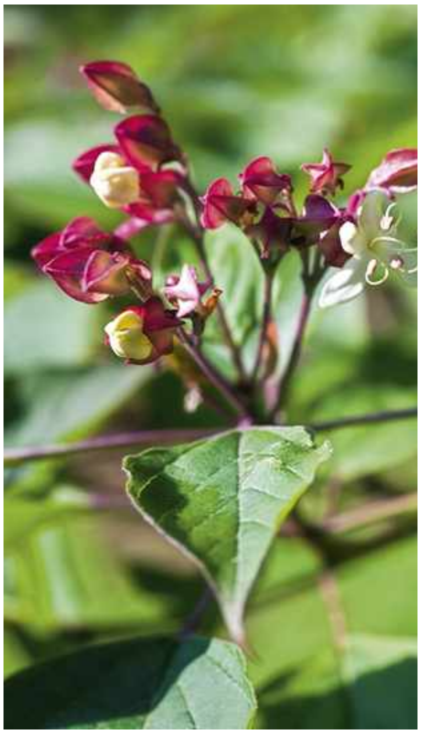
Height/spread 75cm x 60cm.
Origins Ghorepani, Nepal.
Conditions Sun or shade on any well-drained soil.
Season Year-round foliage, spring flowers.

NICK HAMILTON
ORGANIC GARDNER
AND WRITER,
BARNSDALE GARDENS

Clerodendrum trichotomum var. *fargesii*

I love plants that stop you in your tracks. This deciduous, suckering shrub produces magnificently structured, very fragrant white flowers late in the season, each with a reddish calyx. The flowers are then immediately followed by stunning, aquamarine-blue berries that should last well into winter.

Height/spread 3m x 3m.
Origin Southwest China.
Conditions Sunny position in most soils.
Season Flowers emerge in late August and berries last well into winter.


CHRISTINA BOLLEN / GAP PHOTOS

Dublin 6, Ireland
dillongarden.com
Helen runs regular garden lessons in the summer at her garden. More details on her website (above).
- **Hillier Nurseries**
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Online shop.
- **Nigel Dunnett**
Find out more about Nigel Dunnett's approach to planting design as a means of creating healthy cities and liveable places.
nigeldunnett.info
- **Packwood House**
Packwood Lane, Lapworth,
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Tel 01564 782024,
nationaltrust.org.uk
- **Plant Talk**
Graham Rice's blog with seed supplier Mr Fothergills looks at new plants and seasonal activities:
blog.mr-fothergills.co.uk/category/plant-talk-with-graham-rice/
- **Sissinghurst Castle**
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nationaltrust.org.uk
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Vegetable garden

Jojo marks the new year by drawing up wish lists of must-have seeds and presenting a new format for her monthly column

WORDS **JOJO TULLOH** ILLUSTRATIONS **SARAH YOUNG**

I may be biased but I think cooks who grow their own fruit and vegetables are a cut above the average kitchen incumbent. Not only do they work with ingredients of enviable taste and freshness but the need to make time for both horticultural and culinary tasks requires a delicate balancing act. The kitchen gardener has to think ahead, to feed the earth in autumn in order to produce slim, green, finger-length courgettes the following June. To turn the surplus fruits of late summer into wine-dark jellies or rich and savoury chutneys that will sustain you until next year's harvest. To make your lives and mine a little easier these two pages will work as a month-by-month plan; with jobs for right now, as well as forward planning on what needs to be prepared or ordered for the coming month. On the following page are recipes will really make your produce shine and ideas for cultivars and varieties you may not have grown before.

Growing

January is best spent reading seed catalogues by the fire. Any visits to your plot may well be more for boosting your mental health than for any actual gardening but there are a few tasks for days when the sun is out and the ground is not waterlogged or frozen. Most rhubarb needs little more attention than a good mulch with muck or compost and a check to see that crowns aren't waterlogged and rotting (check your asparagus too if you have it). If you have more than one well-established rhubarb patch you might like to try forcing it. Pop an old chimney pot with a tile on top of the pot (or use similarly tall plastic drum or bucket ideally black to retain heat) over a few promising buds and a few weeks later you will have very long, very pale and straight pink stalks. Forcing weakens the plant, which will not be as productive in following years. For a slower kind of forcing (which results in great flavour) cover the plants in autumn with dead leaves a foot high (surrounded by chicken wire to stop the leaves blowing away). Leaf mould is a happy by-product of this method.

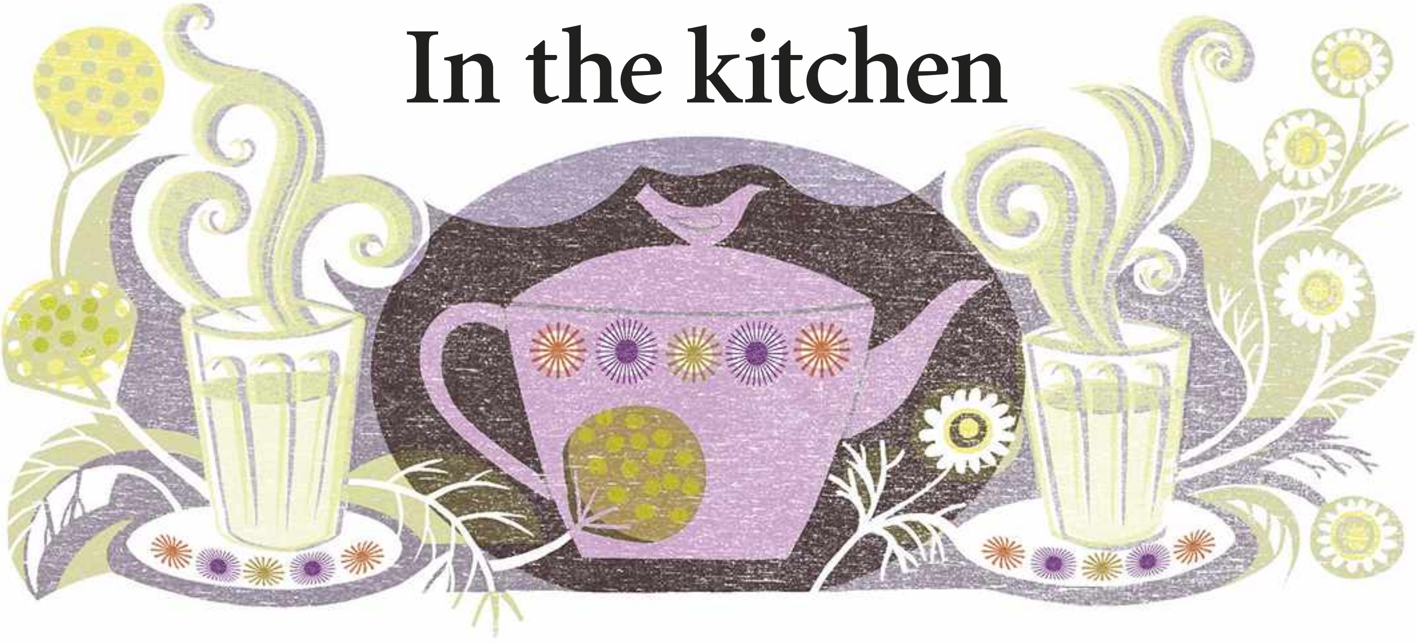
Towards the end of the month give apple and pear trees a winter prune. Refer to a good pruning guide but in short you are aiming to remove crossing, diseased or broken branches first and then shorten the previous year's growth. My plum trees functioned as an aphid superhighway this summer so this month I will also be giving them a thorough spray with an organic plant oil winter wash. I use Vitax Winter Wash, which is widely available.

Beekeepers should check on hives to make sure they have not been blown over or the entrance blocked by snow or leaves but leave well alone otherwise.

WHAT TO SOW NOW

- There is still time to plant garlic. I usually plant mine in November but this year I've been tempted by the idea that spring planting allegedly makes for rounder, more symmetrical bulbs (plus less time weeding). As long as the bulb gets a month at less than 10°C all should be well. The Isle of Wight Garlic Company (**thegarlicfarm.co.uk**) has a spring planting selection of four bulbs for £10, including the deep-pink-cloved 'Carcassone Wight', the slower-growing, fiercely flavoured 'Picardy Wight', the superbly flavoured 'Solent Wight' and the aromatic 'Tuscany Wight' with fat cloves right through the bulb. All of these store well, making them ideal for plaiting.
- Now is the time to sow rhubarb sets or cut your own from the youngest most vigorous roots of older clumps by taking a root section 15-20cm long that ends in a fat bud. Plant in a trench full of manure or compost with the bud just showing and do not pick the first year. Ashridge Trees (**ashridgetrees.co.uk**) has 'The Sutton', 'Timperley Early' and 'Stockbridge Arrow' from £3.95. Thompson & Morgan (**thompson-morgan.com**) sells potted rhubarb plants from £12.99 including 'Victoria' and 'Giant Grooveless Crimson'.

In the kitchen



I used to be a much better cook than gardener. I got my allotment (where my vegetable growing education began from scratch) a good decade after I had become competent in the kitchen. Fifteen years on the desire to grow as much fresh produce as possible myself has forced me to become a more skilful and attentive gardener, while the need to respond to my hard-earned plenty has also made me a more imaginative cook. When I get back from a bright cold morning at the allotment and sit down to a meal of peppery winter salad leaves (rocket, sorrel, mustard and deep-red chicory 'Treviso Rosso') eaten with home-made sourdough bread and cheese with chutney made from last year's glut of apples and plums I feel good. The circle is complete. The recipes here are for the time-poor, modern gardener – all are for very achievable, uncomplicated dishes, alongside quick and easy preserves and pickles that will help spread the enjoyment of your ingredients over the year.

> Now is the time to plan for next season's harvest. I make extravagant wish lists from my favourite catalogues and comb through cookbooks

Now is the time to plan for next season's harvest. I make extravagant wish lists from my favourite catalogues (Tuckers Seeds, Franchi Seeds, Chiltern Seeds and The Organic Gardening Catalogue) but I also comb through cookbooks such as *Chez Panisse Vegetable* by Alice L Waters and Jane Grigson's *Vegetable Book* for cultivars and crops new to me. I check what did well last year, look back at past orders to see what I've forgotten and then I sort through the biscuit tin that holds my seeds to see which are still viable. I seem to be entering my tisane years so I will be reworking my herb garden with that in mind. Jekka McVicar has a beautifully packaged Herbal Tea Seed Collection (camomile, fennel, hyssop, thyme and lemon balm), which costs £9.99 (inc p&p) from **jekkasherbfarm.com** to which I'd add bergamot, oat flowers, lavender and mint.

What you have growing in January will vary greatly. The better prepared will have stores of potatoes and carrots with leeks, parsnips, chicory, chard, cabbage, Brussels sprouts and Jerusalem artichoke still in the ground. If you are more of a fair-weather allotment gardener then sorrel is a wonderful winter crop. It thrives on very little attention and tolerates semi shade making it a good plant for back gardens. I adore it for the bright taste of lemons it delivers, especially welcome in mid winter when it makes a good alternative to basil cut into thin strips as a fresh herb to be added at the last minute. When cooked it goes a slightly sludgy brown colour, which may or may not bother you. I cut it into ribbons and use it on top of pizzas made with taleggio and potato or to liven up salads of shop-bought little gem or waxy boiled potatoes dressed with thinly sliced shallots, olive oil and red wine vinegar. □

RECIPES

- **For a quick lunch, one of my favourite ways to use sorrel is in an omelette. (Serves 1): 2 eggs (good free-range ones), 1tbsp water, dab of butter, handful of sorrel leaves (no stalks) sliced into ribbons, sea salt and pepper, 2tbsp freshly grated parmesan**
Crack the eggs in a bowl, whisk well and add water. Heat a heavy frying pan over a medium to high heat and add the butter. Let it melt and swirl around the pan. When it is good and hot add the egg. Tip the pan so that the egg evenly covers the bottom, coating it thinly. Throw in the sorrel, season and add the parmesan. After just over a minute give the pan a little tap on the cooker to dislodge the omelette and tip it out on to your plate. Eat up with a good slice of bread and butter and a few leaves from the winter garden.

- **Salads that invigorate and revitalise are the perfect food for January and will stop you from succumbing to root vegetable ennui. Chicory is a great foil for strong flavours, such as blue cheese and walnuts, but this bright-tasting salad is made with fennel and blood oranges: 4 blood oranges, 1 bulb fennel (outer leaves removed), 1 head crisp chicory leaves (whichever variety you have grown), 1tbsp olive oil, sea salt and black pepper**
Trim and slice the fennel into thin shavings. With a sharp knife cut off the top and bottom of the oranges, remove the rest of the peel and pith as carefully as you can. Slice the oranges into thin discs and remove the pips. Arrange on a serving dish (or individual plates) with the fennel and chicory leaves and zig-zag over the oil. Season and serve.

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Tom Longridge

Former social care manager Tom Longridge has a great love for trees and as gardener at Beningbrough Hall near York he gets to works alongside some of the best in the country

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest gardening memory The smell of cut grass; my brother and I would immerse ourselves in the hot pile of fresh grass clippings.

First plant love As a boy I was a bit of a tree climber (still am, when the mood takes me), so the first plants I felt emotionally connected to were trees. I remember feeling quite devastated when an old walnut tree blew down in the night, changing the view from my bedroom window.

What was your route into gardening I used to work in the social care sector, managing homes for adults with learning disabilities, but I reached a point where the long hours and diminishing job satisfaction made me realise it was time for a change. By this time I had landscaped and planted the small garden in my first house, which was when I really got into plants. After a visit to Askham Bryan College open day, I dared to believe I could make something I loved doing into a career.

Favourite garden that has influenced you Great Dixter in East Sussex, for its warm spirit and its experimental approach. It's more than just a garden.

Three worthwhile tips for every gardener Keep a garden journal – it becomes an invaluable record to refer back to. Don't be afraid to experiment with plant combinations – there is no absolute right and wrong. Staking is an art and should not be done as an afterthought.

Who is your horticultural hero and why? Joseph Banks who took the first great voyage with Captain Cook to discover Australia. He was president of the Royal Society for more than 41 years and played a key role in establishing Kew as the leading botanical garden in the world.

Unsung hero of the plant world Yew – as a clipped shape it adds definition and structure to a border in summer and winter. It is long lived, and if hacked back will grow again. Great for hedging and, unlike box, does not suffer from blight.

Biggest challenge facing gardeners today Being able to earn a living wage despite being in a skilled profession. And coping with the ever more unpredictable weather.

Favourite gardening book *The Brother Gardeners* by Andrea Wulf. I read this book while doing a short stint at the Chelsea Physic Garden in London. It tells the story of the key figures in horticulture in the 18th century, from Philip Miller to Carl Linnaeus.

Contact tom.longridge@nationaltrust.org.uk

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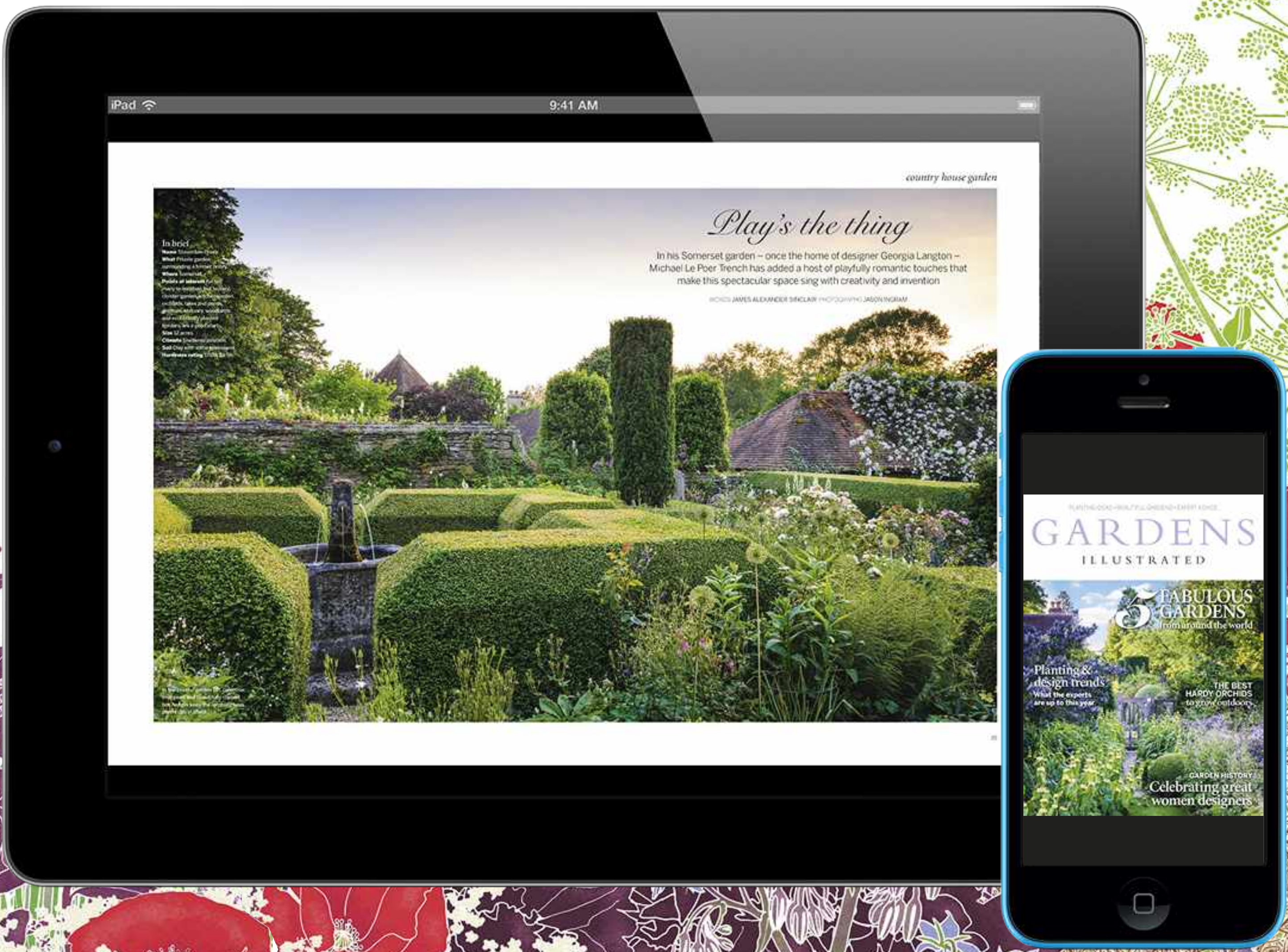
A must-have read for passionate gardeners, GARDENS ILLUSTRATED magazine provides a unique insight into the world's most beautiful gardens, irresistible plants and clever design.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Play's the thing

In his Somerset garden – once the home of designer Georgia Langton – Michael Le Poer Trench has added a host of playfully romantic touches that make this spectacular space sing with creativity and invention

WORDS JAMES ALEXANDER SINCLAIR PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

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GARDENS
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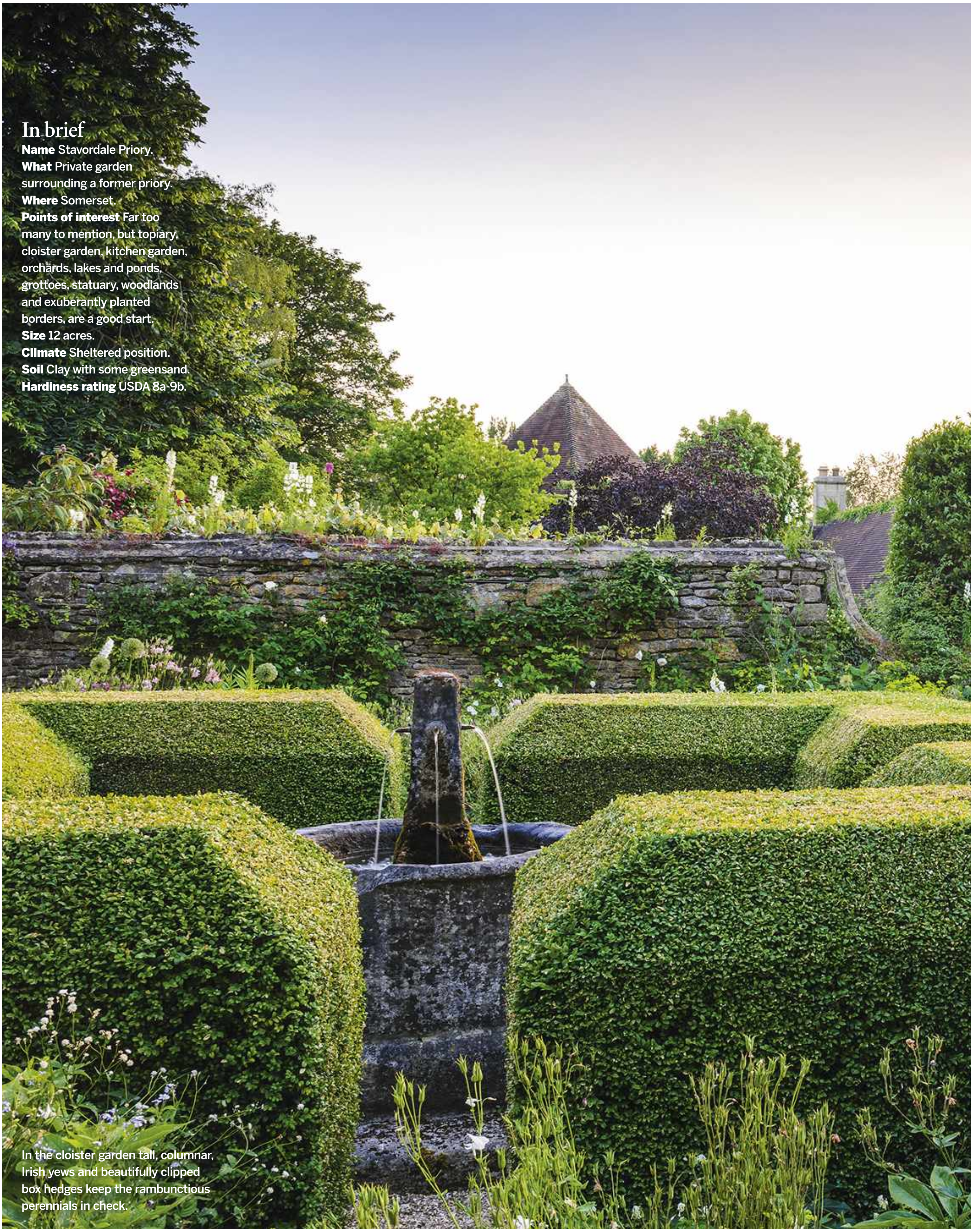


In brief

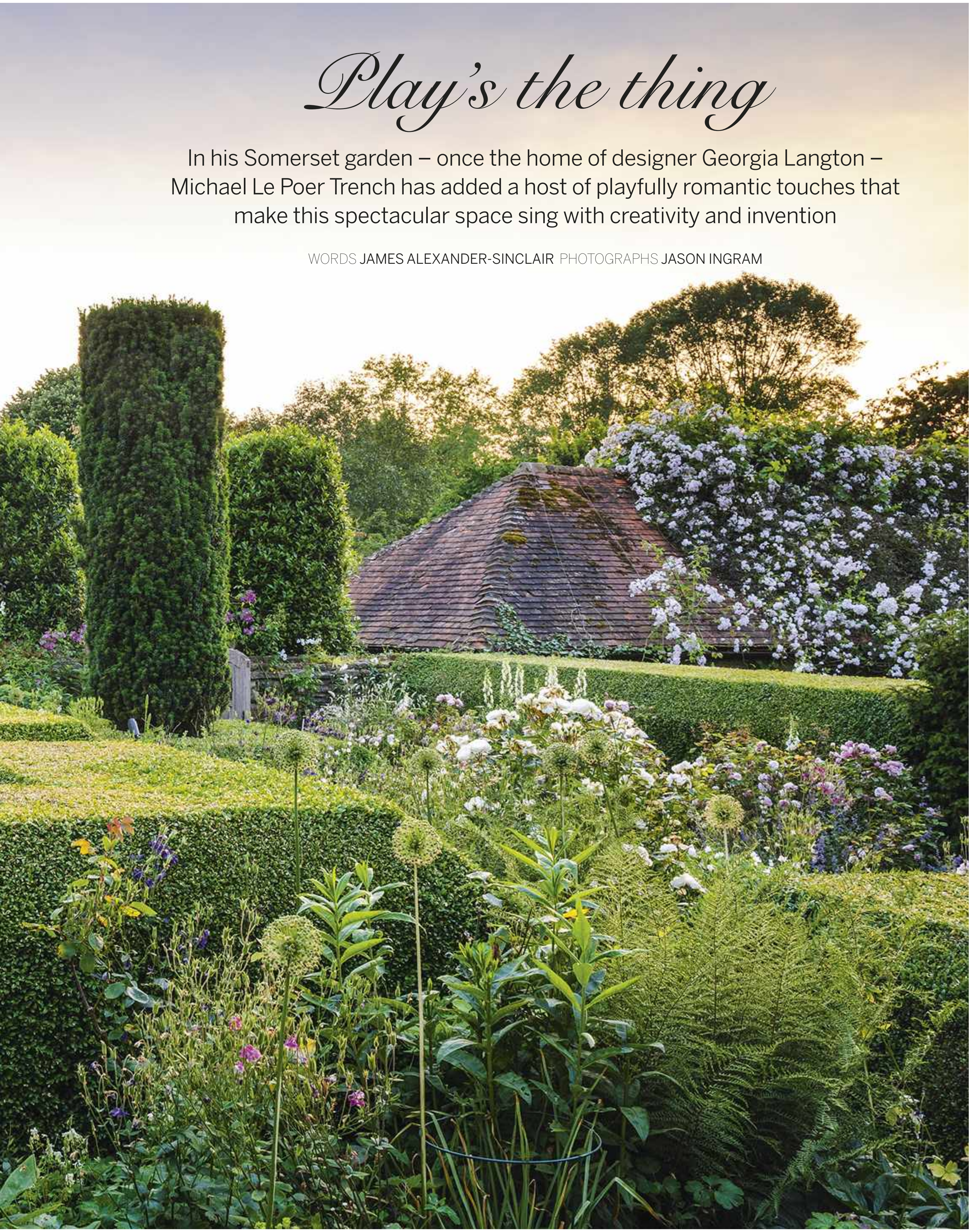
Name Stavordale Priory.
What Private garden surrounding a former priory.
Where Somerset.
Points of interest Far too many to mention, but topiary, cloister garden, kitchen garden, orchards, lakes and ponds, grottoes, statuary, woodlands and exuberantly planted borders, are a good start.
Size 12 acres.
Climate Sheltered position.
Soil Clay with some greensand.
Hardiness rating USDA 8a-9b.

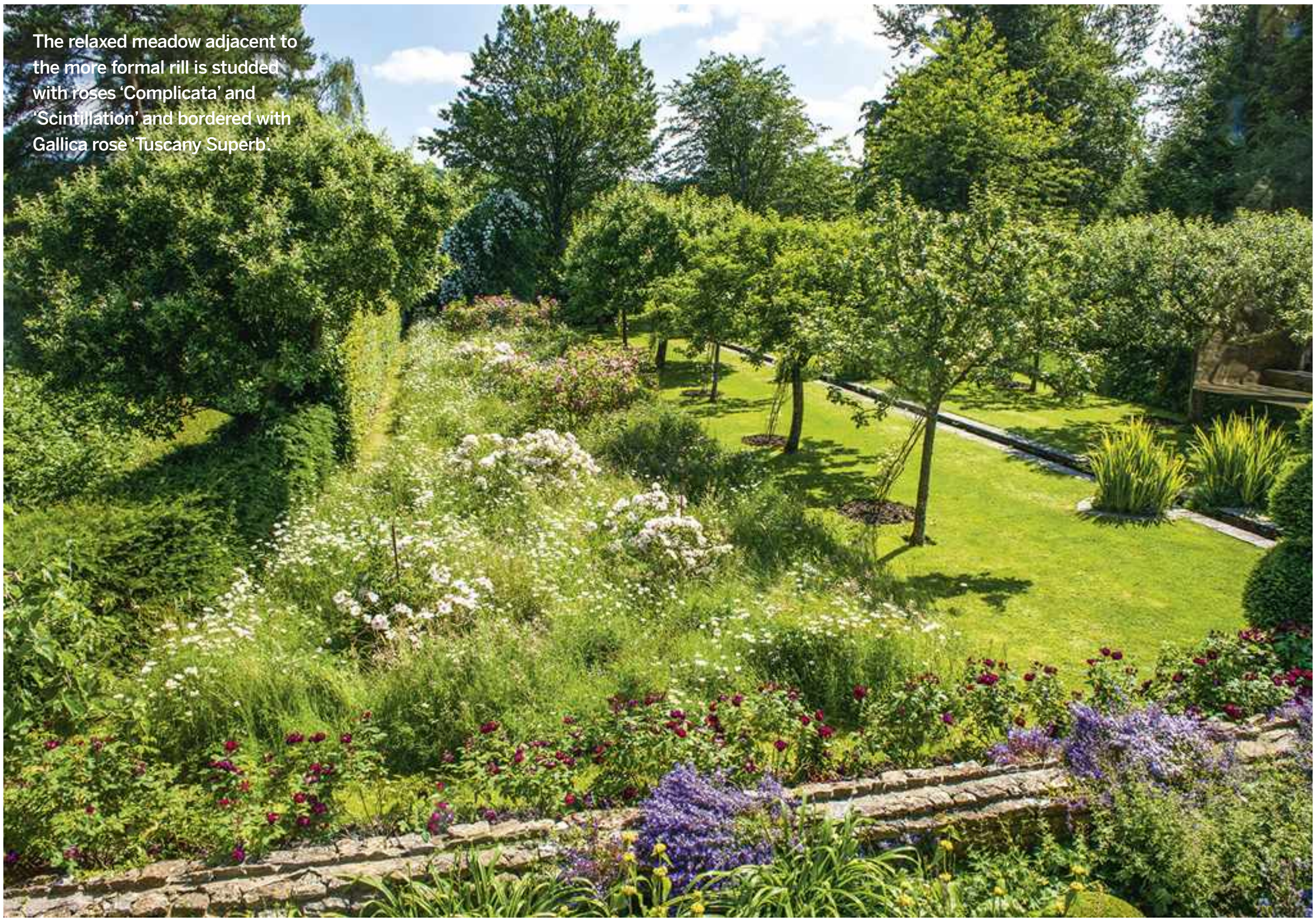
In the cloister garden tall, columnar, Irish yews and beautifully clipped box hedges keep the rambunctious perennials in check.

Play's the thing

In his Somerset garden – once the home of designer Georgia Langton – Michael Le Poer Trench has added a host of playfully romantic touches that make this spectacular space sing with creativity and invention

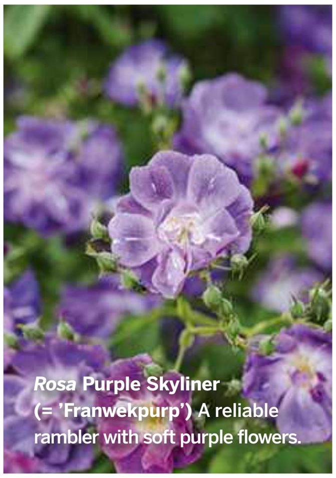
WORDS **JAMES ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**



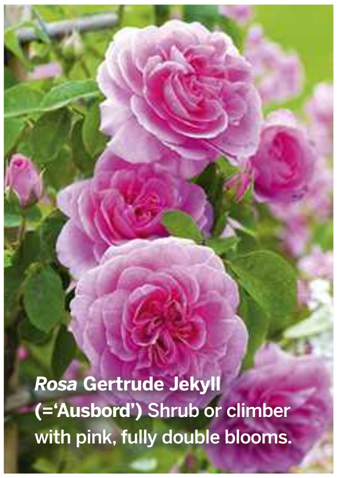


The relaxed meadow adjacent to the more formal rill is studded with roses 'Complicata' and 'Scintillation' and bordered with Gallica rose 'Tuscany Superb'.

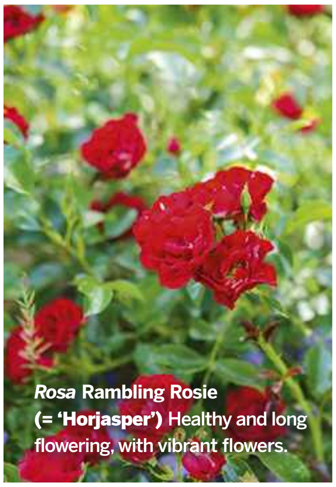
MICHAEL LE POER TRENCH



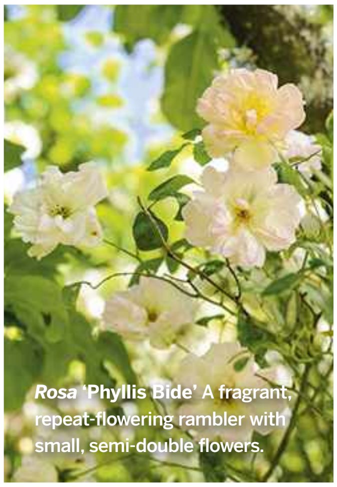
***Rosa* Purple Skyliner (= 'Franwekpurp')** A reliable rambler with soft purple flowers.



***Rosa* Gertrude Jekyll (='Ausbord')** Shrub or climber with pink, fully double blooms.



***Rosa* Rambling Rosie (= 'Horjasper')** Healthy and long flowering, with vibrant flowers.



***Rosa* 'Phyllis Bide'** A fragrant, repeat-flowering rambler with small, semi-double flowers.

FRIEDRICH STRAUSS / GAP PHOTOS

I quite often get asked about my favourite garden: a question that is almost as impossible to answer as what is your favourite food or which is your favourite child. It varies from season to season and from year to year; we have the right to be fickle and our affections flit capriciously from one place to the next. But, and this is a big but, if I were being forcibly pummelled and had to give an answer then the gardens at Stavordale Priory would be very high up on my list.

The next question, of course, is why? Perhaps that is a little bit easier to answer. The key to a good garden is down to so many things but most important of these is the feeling you get when you walk through the garden. I know that is woolly and not at all scientific but it is the way that most people evaluate gardens. Stavordale is a garden that wraps its hugging arms around you and makes you feel welcome. It is also the sort of garden that has so many disparate elements you can get happily lost discovering new things around almost every corner.

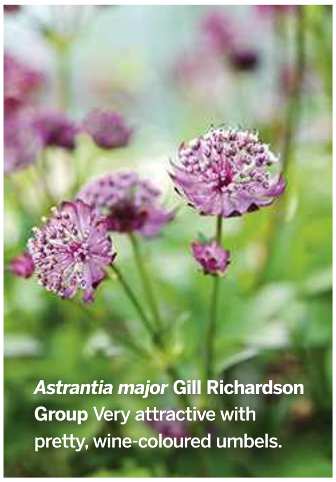
Michael Le Poer Trench and his partner, the theatre producer Sir Cameron Mackintosh, have lived here for more than 20 years. It is a building that brims with history: starting with the Augustinian canons who occupied the original priory for the first 300 years of its existence before it became a farm after the dissolution of the monasteries. In the early 20th century it was converted from a farm to gentleman's residence by the architect TE Collcutt (who also designed the Savoy Hotel and the ▷

An arch with *Rosa* Purple Skyliner (= 'Franwekpurp') leads through to the cloister garden planted with a row of *Rosa* Sister Elizabeth (= 'Auspalette') and the white spires of *Aconitum* x *cammarum* 'Grandiflorum Album'.

An elegant gate, designed by Cameron and commissioned from a local craftsman, frames the simple yet stylish rill.

Agastache **'Blackadder'** Forms a mass of smoky-purple spires. A butterfly magnet.

Papaver somniferum **'Lauren's Grape'** Lovely ruby coloured self-seeding poppy.



Astrantia major **Gill Richardson Group** Very attractive with pretty, wine-coloured umbels.

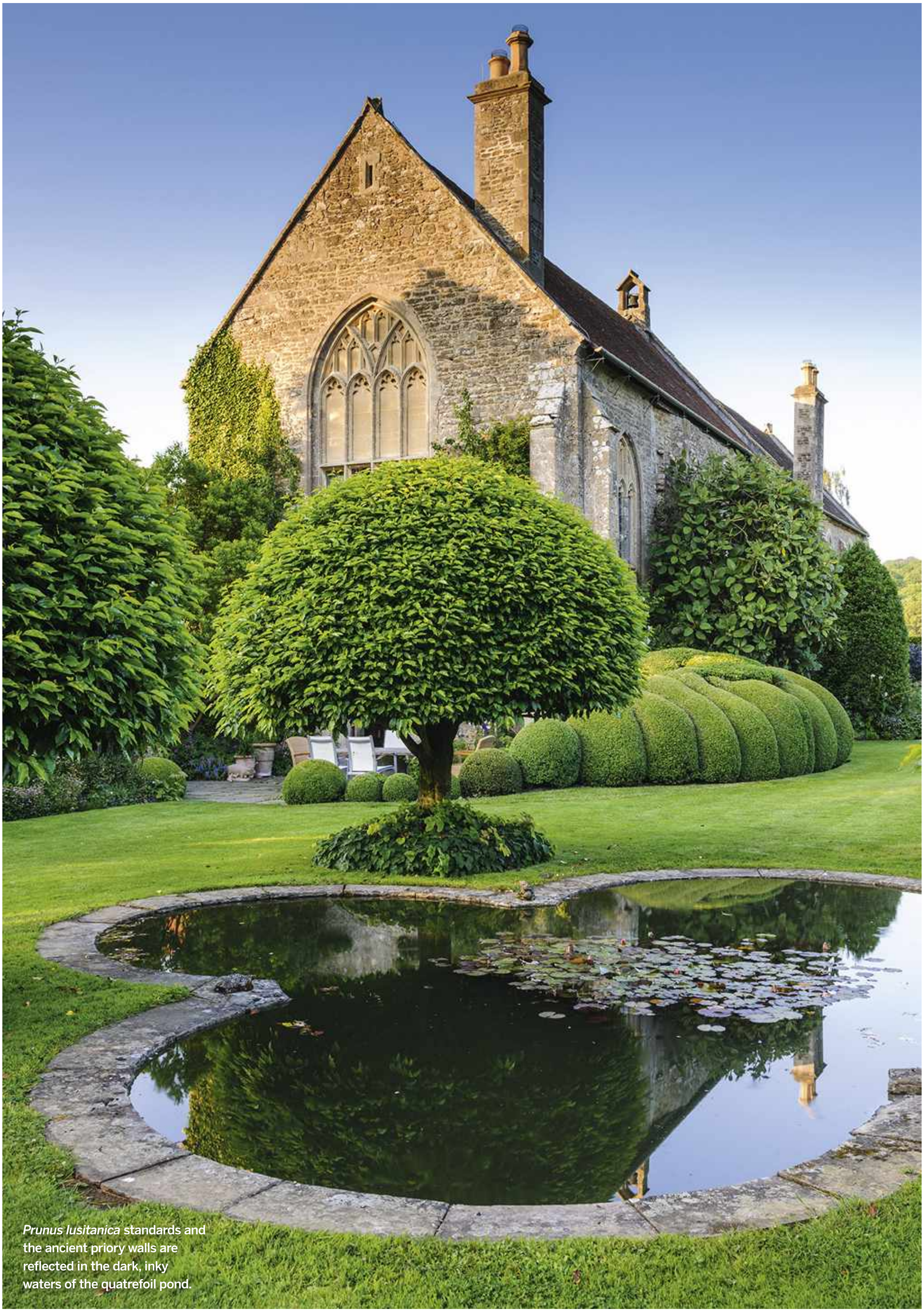
Salvia **'Amistad'** A new, long flowering cultivar with stunning, purple flowers.

JASON INGRAM / GAP PHOTOS

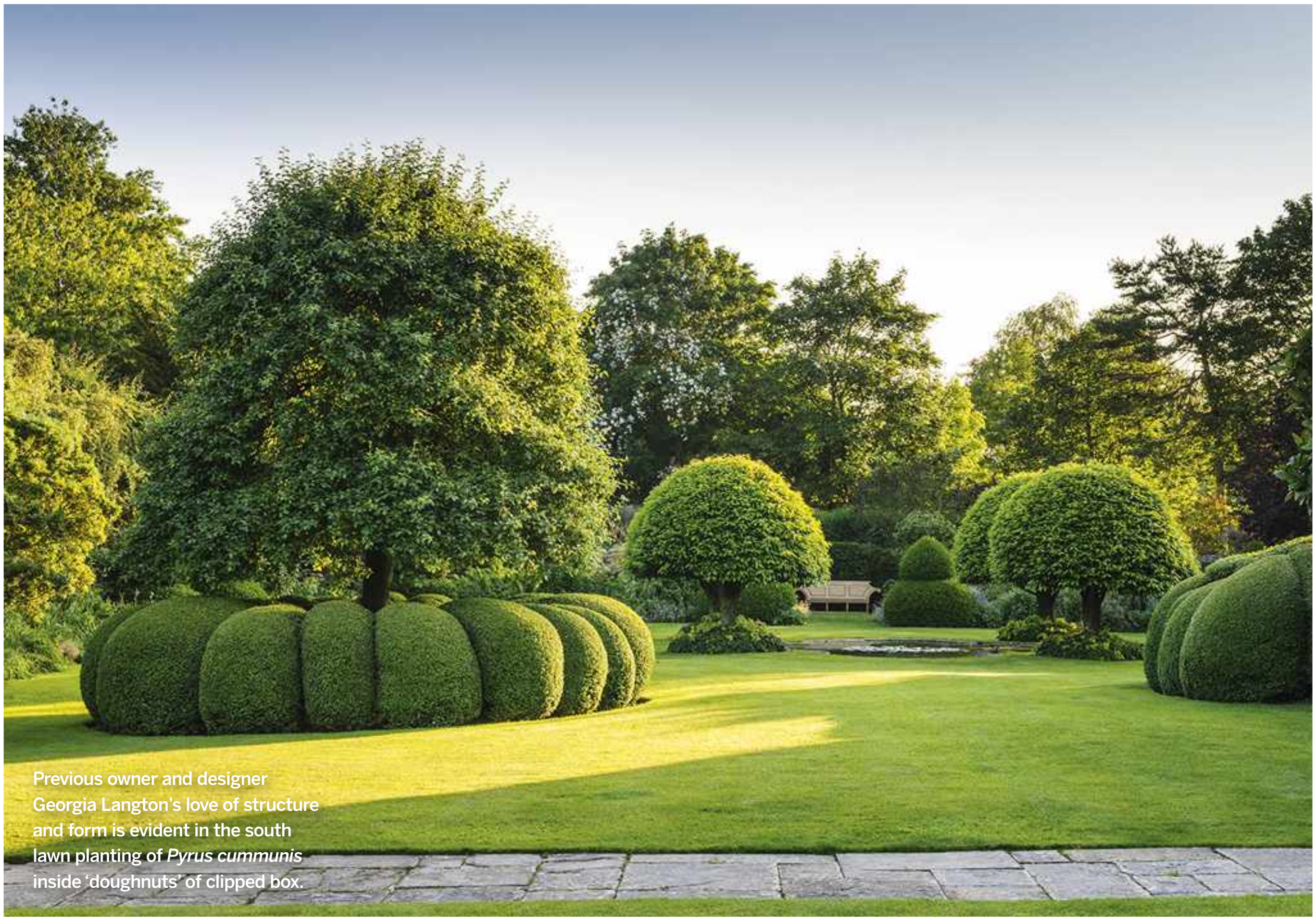
> *Stavordale has so many elements you can get happily lost discovering new things around almost every corner*

▷ Palace Theatre, where *Les Misérables* played for 19 years). The garden we see today was largely created by designer Georgia Langton, Stavordale's previous owner for 15 years. Michael's enthusiasm and passion has fleshed out her initial vision.

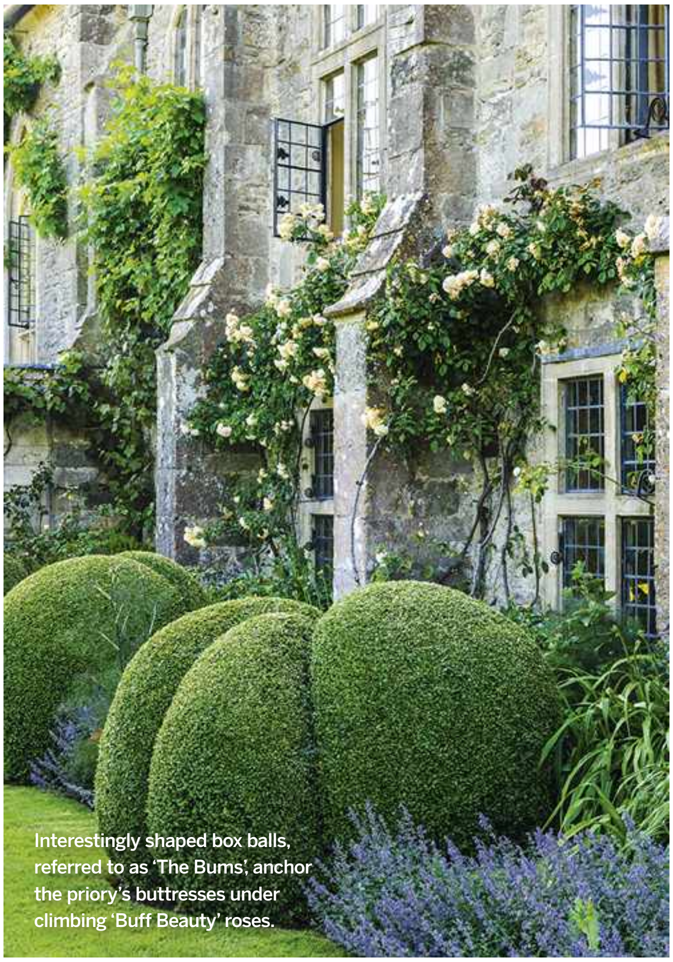
Near the house are the cloister gardens: tightly packed borders with sculpted hedges and stately Irish yews gathered into two formal gardens. Further along near the kitchen is a border as deep and tall and elegant as a barrow full of chorus girls. Wispy *Thalictrum delavayi*, throbbing *Monarda* 'Scorpion' and that sultriest of salvias, *Salvia* 'Amistad'. This encircles a quatrefoil pond (kept as dark as the river Styx by the regular application of black dye) and the first of many elegantly edged lawns. To be honest, this garden has so many delicious areas it is difficult to know where to stop. There are borders for all tastes and all seasons (including a rather striking orange number against the walls of the old chapel – lots of daylilies and kniphofias) and there are meadows, orchards (one of them studded with roses), rills, gates and even more plants, in particular there are clematis of all shapes scattered through the garden. Michael is a self-confessed "group-three groupie". A reference to the ▷



Prunus lusitanica standards and the ancient priory walls are reflected in the dark, inky waters of the quatrefoil pond.



Previous owner and designer Georgia Langton's love of structure and form is evident in the south lawn planting of *Pyrus cummunis* inside 'doughnuts' of clipped box.

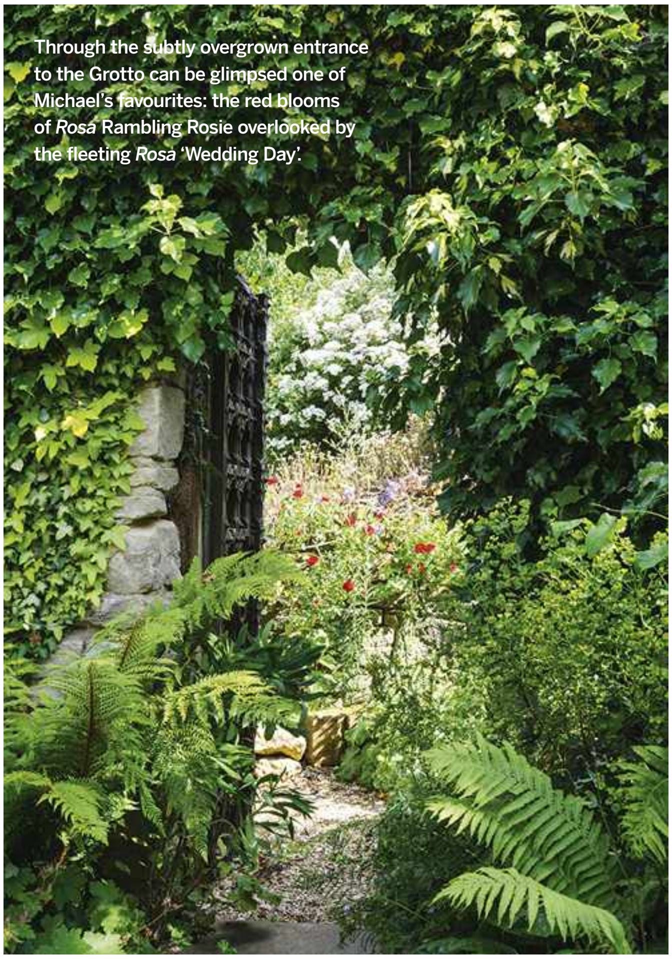


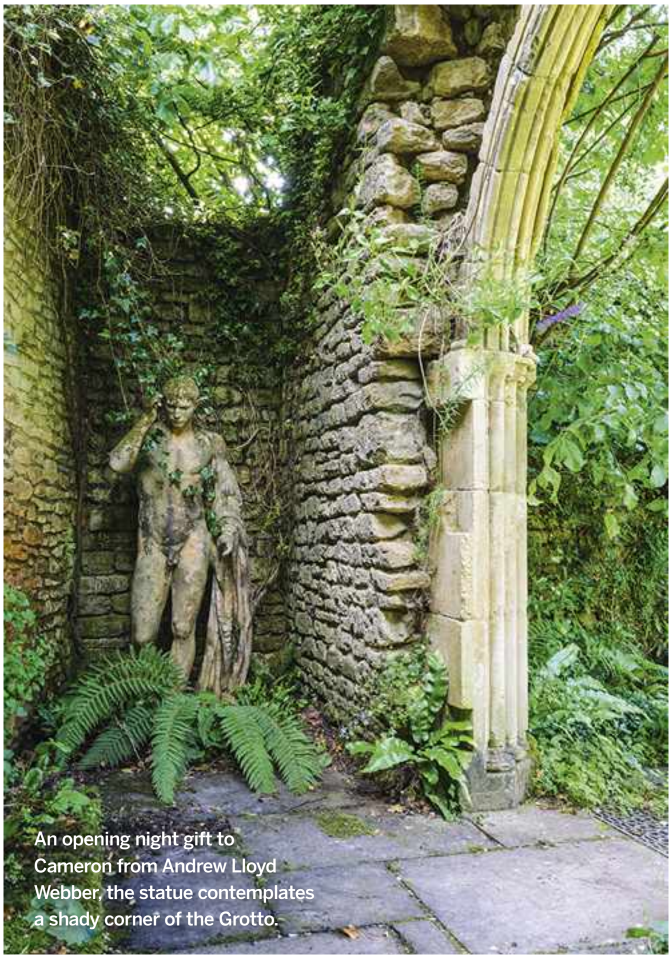
Interestingly shaped box balls, referred to as 'The Bums', anchor the priory's buttresses under climbing 'Buff Beauty' roses.

> *There are clematis of all shapes scattered through the garden… draped elegantly across shrubs and twined around piers*

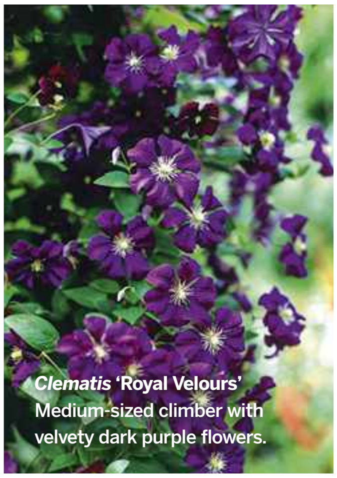
▷ late-flowering/early pruned varieties that are draped elegantly across shrubs and twined around piers – for example *Clematis* 'Rooguchi', which is not one I had met before: it has nodding bell-shaped flowers the colour of deep-blue ink.

Turn one corner and you'll find the Granny Pond – named for Georgia's mother the plantswoman Olive Taylor-Smith – surrounded by marginals and other plants; push through a path and there is an avenue (no less) of the gloriously plump-flowered *Prunus* 'Tai-haku'. Round another corner is an immaculately ordered kitchen garden along with a cutting garden from which vases and vases of flowers are gathered for the house. If you squeeze through a gap in the hedge you find yourself in a long rectangular lavender garden. Venture further still and you'll come across Michael's 50th birthday arboretum where most of the trees are presents from friends. There are also follies and grottoes and a lake with boathouse and wild shade planting. There is even an elephant: an enormous, larger-than-life-sized elephant. But as spectacular as these many elements are, they are not the most striking thing about this splendid garden. Stavordale is not ▷

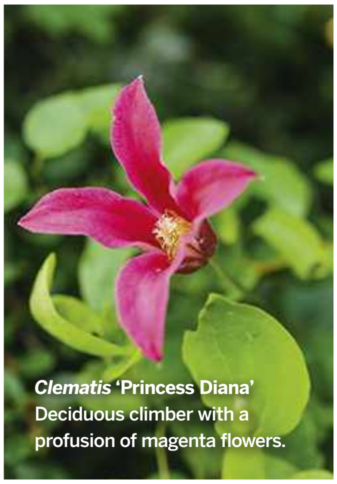

Through the subtly overgrown entrance to the Grotto can be glimpsed one of Michael's favourites: the red blooms of *Rosa* Rambling Rosie overlooked by the fleeting *Rosa* 'Wedding Day'.


An opening night gift to Cameron from Andrew Lloyd Webber, the statue contemplates a shady corner of the Grotto.

***Clematis* Princess Kate (='Zoprika')** New cultivar with white flowers flushed with plum.


***Clematis* 'Royal Velours'** Medium-sized climber with velvety dark purple flowers.

***Clematis* 'Rooguchi'** Shiny purple bells adorn this non-clinging herbaceous scrambler.


***Clematis* 'Princess Diana'** Deciduous climber with a profusion of magenta flowers.

MARIANNE MAJERUS, LEIGH CLAPP / GAP PHOTOS, CROCUS.CO.UK

Stavordale is not really about spectacle (although there is plenty of that here), it's much more about creativity and gardening

▷ really about spectacle (although there is plenty of that here), it's much more about creativity and gardening.

This is a garden that throbs with activity: everywhere you look there's evidence of someone gardening and having great fun in the process. There are old plants on the way to another home, new (beautifully labelled) plants going in, topiary being clipped (mostly by cloud-pruning specialist Jake Hobson, the master of the tonsured hedge) and edges being edged.

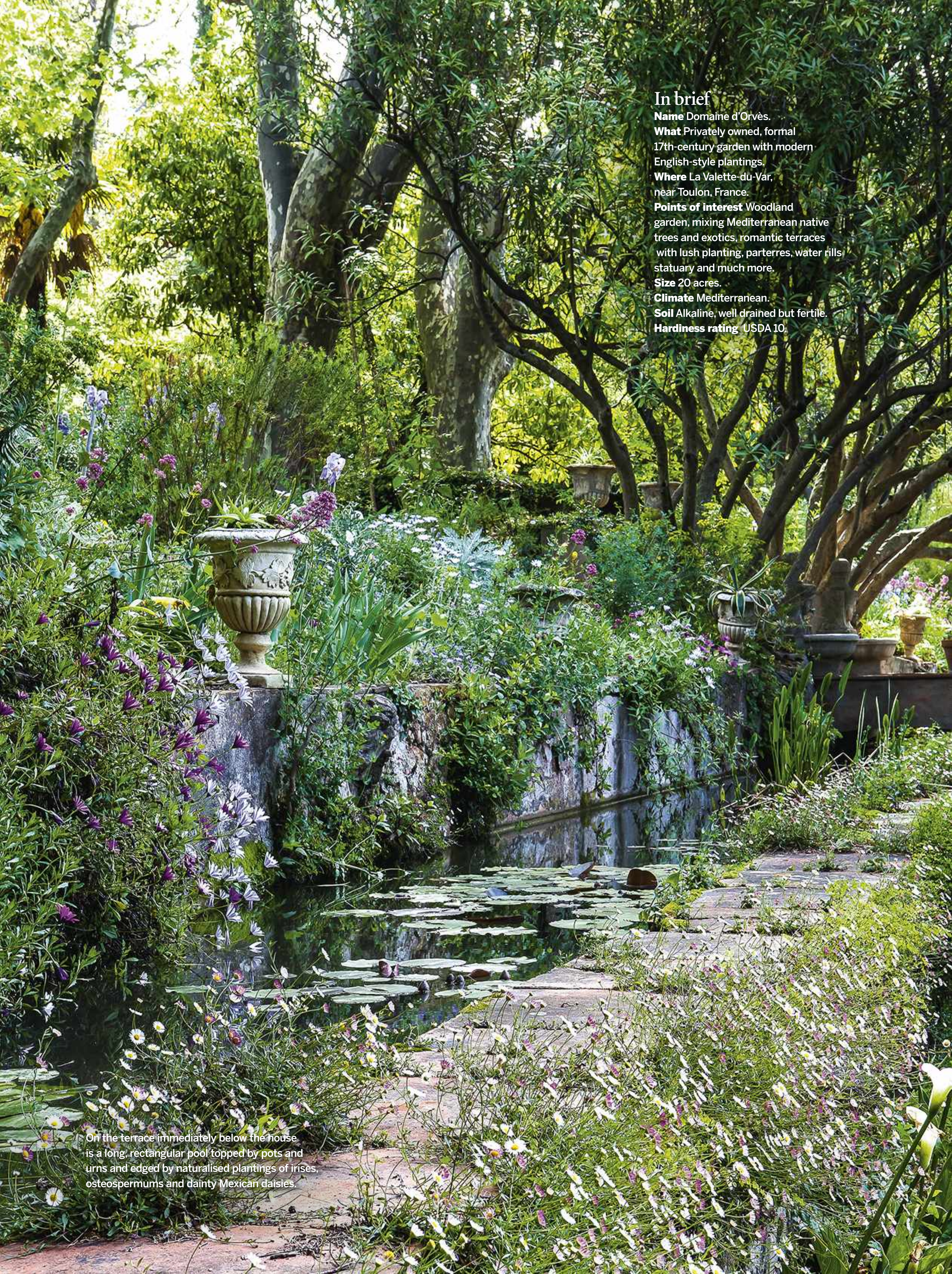
The big problem with this garden is that there is too much for anybody to take in during a single visit and no matter how many words I write it will take much more than one article to do it justice. I've seen a lot of gardens and to be immersed in so much beauty can sometimes make one slightly jaded but in the case of Stavordale I feel the need to go back many times. It's a tough gig this garden writing game, but somebody has to do it. □

READER EVENT

Writer and designer James Alexander-Sinclair will be revealing the secrets of successful design at the GARDENS ILLUSTRATED Festival in April. For full details see page 10 or visit **gardensfestival.com**

The 'no-dig' method is practised in the vegetable garden, which also supplies armfuls of cut flowers for the house.

The Granny Pond is surrounded by moisture-loving primulas, irises, zantedeschias and ligularias, overlooked by the swamp cypress *Taxodium distinchum*.



In brief

Name Domaine d'Orvès.
What Privately owned, formal 17th-century garden with modern English-style plantings.
Where La Valette-du-Var, near Toulon, France.
Points of interest Woodland garden, mixing Mediterranean native trees and exotics, romantic terraces with lush planting, parterres, water rills statuary and much more.
Size 20 acres.
Climate Mediterranean.
Soil Alkaline, well drained but fertile.
Hardiness rating USDA 10.

On the terrace immediately below the house is a long, rectangular pool topped by pots and urns and edged by naturalised plantings of irises, osteospermums and dainty Mexican daisies.

Left Succession planting provides colour throughout the garden for months. In this beautifully balanced corner the oleander will add colour just as the scrambling rose begins to fade.

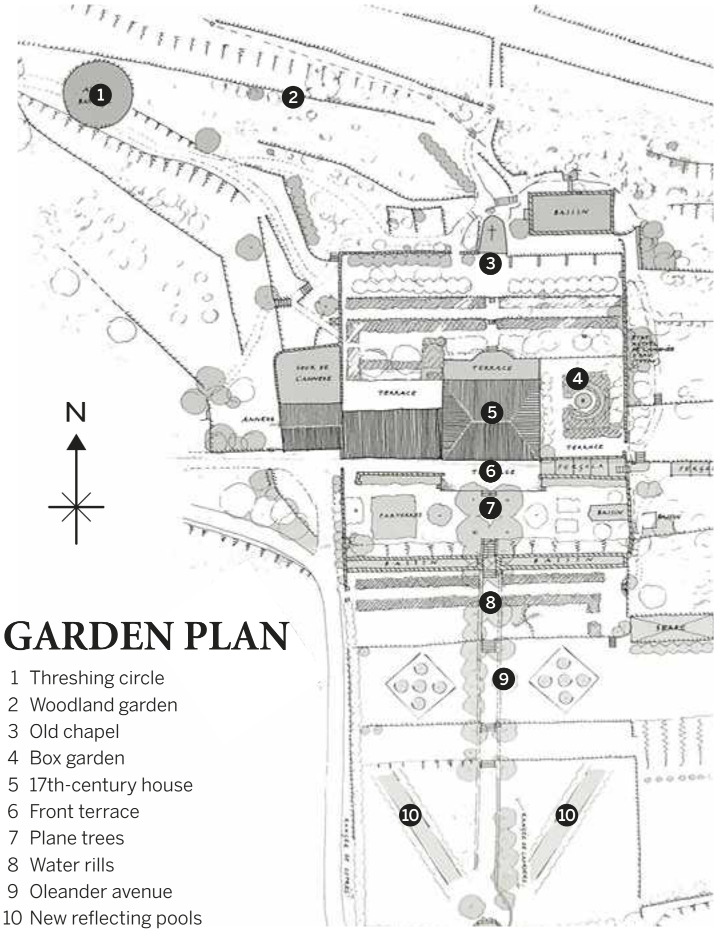
Below The steps up to the house from the entrance gate run underneath an arch of ancient oleanders.

Bottom Swathes of irises are one of the joys of Domaine d'Orvès in late spring. The bearded irises grow right up against the trunk of a fig tree.

Savoir flair

With her knowledge of plants and instinctive feel for design, Françoise Darlington has gloriously transformed the beautiful garden her parents created

WORDS CHARLES QUEST-RITSON
PHOTOGRAPHS LE SCANFF-MAYER



GARDEN PLAN

1 Threshing circle
2 Woodland garden
3 Old chapel
4 Box garden
5 17th-century house
6 Front terrace
7 Plane trees
8 Water rills
9 Oleander avenue
10 New reflecting pools

COURTESY OF DOMAINE D'ORVRÈS

Domaine d'Orvès sits on the lowest slopes of Mont Coudon, a limestone outcrop behind Toulon in southern France. The whole landscape is bathed in that extraordinary Provençal light that has long inspired so many artists. The hillside bustles with springs, wells and irrigation canals – known locally as *goulottes* – and this abundance of water creates profusion, especially in the formal parts of the garden near the house. The growth of plants is conspicuously lush, even in summer. And yet the great worry, as it is so frequently in Mediterranean gardens, is the danger of fire.

The painter Pierre Deval bought the estate in 1925. Gradually its trees, structure and landscape became an integral part of his work as an artist, while his wife Henriette delighted in flowers. During the war, the estate was requisitioned by the German occupying forces but, when Pierre and his family returned in 1945 he set about restoring the house and garden with the help of German prisoners-of-war. Pierre was particularly concerned to repair the hard landscaping and to replant his much-loved trees.

For the past 20 years, Domaine d'Orvès has been home to the Devals' daughter Françoise Darlington, who lived in London for many years, where she attended fortnightly shows at the RHS and learned to love the way the English garden with plants. She has transformed Domaine d'Orvès into a magical combination of French style and English plantsmanship. "The essential prerequisite in restoring an old garden is to go ahead very slowly," she says. "This leads to a gentle and sometimes harmonious design." She restored the paths and steps at the heart of the garden and slowly expanded until she reached the double gates at the bottom of the Hortus Conclusus. It is here that the visitor enters the garden today; where a fine specimen of ▷

French dressing

Seven key elements that enhance the charm of the garden at Domaine d'Orvrès

The old olives trees, a rare local cultivar called 'Brun', which have recovered from being cut to the ground by German troops during the Second World War.

Many of the **sculptural studies** in the garden were created by Françoise's father, the painter Pierre Deval.

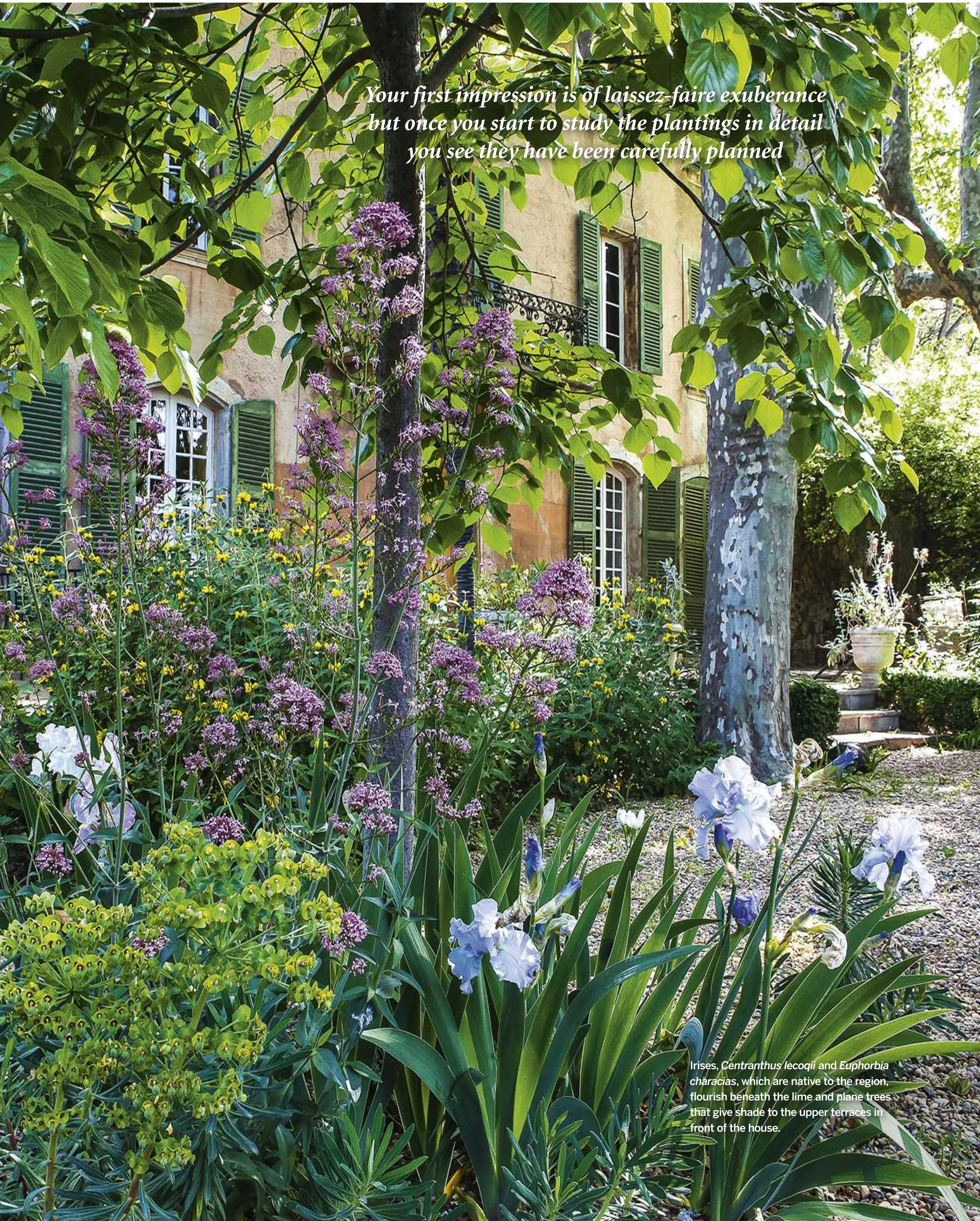
The **steps** that lead to the house, which have been worn and rounded by 300 years of treading up and down.

Successive plantings of different **irises** are one of the delights of Domaine d'Orvès in spring.

Water which runs gently through tanks on the terraces below the house and irrigates the exotic plantings.

An avenue of oleanders that arch over the central steps leading up from the drive to the house.

The formal structure of the garden and its terraces has been softened and enhanced by English-style plantings Françoise introduced when she returned from London 20 years ago.



Your first impression is of laissez-faire exuberance but once you start to study the plantings in detail you see they have been carefully planned

Irises, *Centranthus lecoqii* and *Euphorbia characias*, which are native to the region, flourish beneath the lime and plane trees that give shade to the upper terraces in front of the house.

Above Françoise has taken advantage of the abundant water supply to create new pools and extend the plantings right down to the bottom of the garden. Tall rows of cypresses help protect the garden from the Mistral wind.

Right The steps up the terraces towards the house are lined with flowers. Later in the summer, these china roses and irises will be followed by chasmanthes and, in late winter, by freesias.

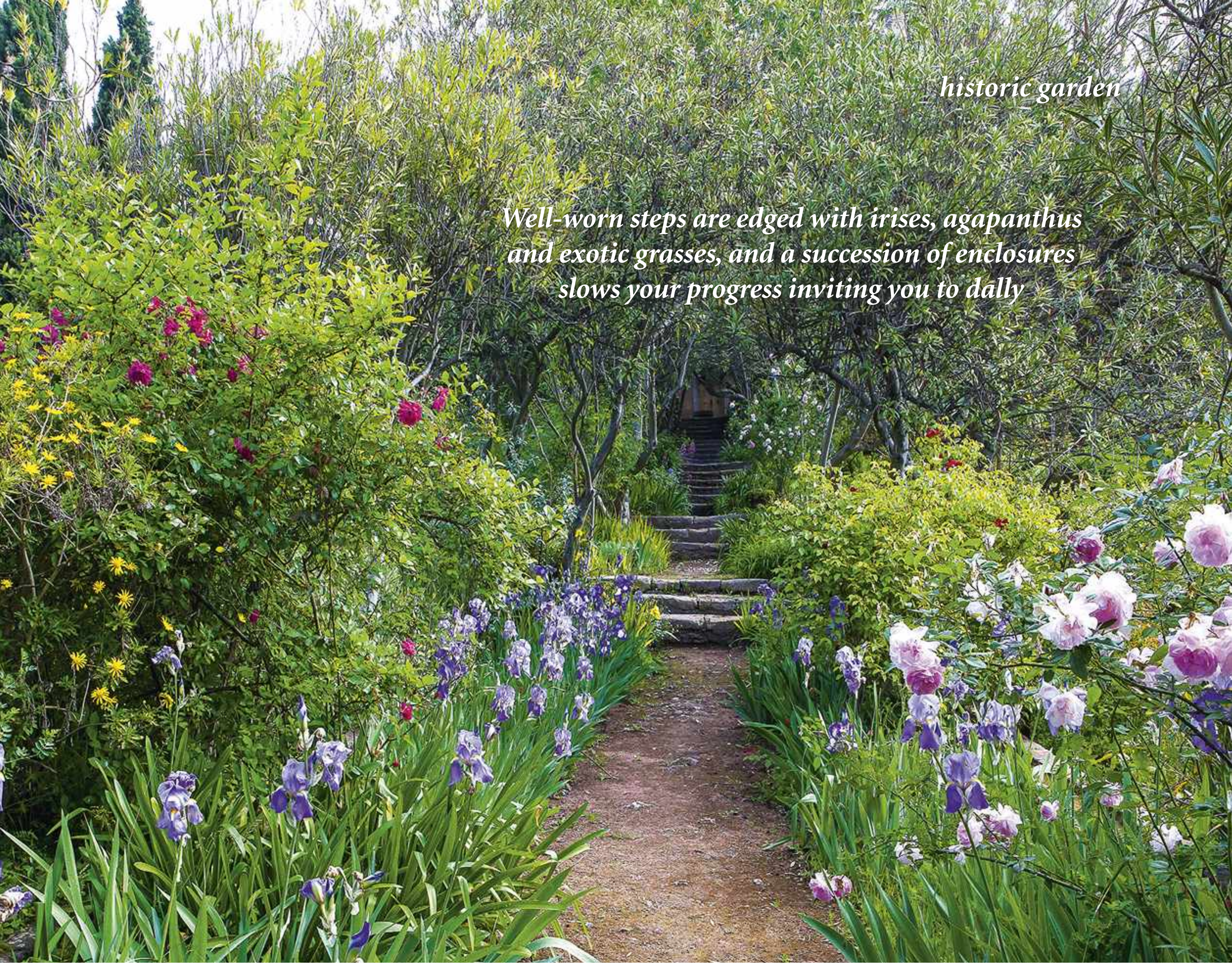
▷ the wild, single form of *Rosa banksiae var normalis* and a huge *Anisodontea capensis* hint at the plantsmanship within. The main axis continues to the house, up a series of terraces and under an avenue of huge, old oleanders – single and double, pink, white and red – some of them scented. The well-worn steps are edged with irises, agapanthus and exotic grasses, and a seemingly endless succession of enclosures slows your progress inviting you to dally.

Your first impression everywhere is of laissez-faire exuberance but once you start to study the plantings in detail you see that they have been carefully planned. Self-seeding is encouraged and the resultant plants are often allowed to break out, survive and thrive where they wish. They soften the outlines of what is a strong and formal structure *à la française*. On the top terrace, Françoise planted a parterre, inspired by the design of the garden at London's Garden Museum, with roses, lavender, irises, Japanese anemones, seasonal bulbs and *Euphorbia characias*. Much use is made of irises and ornamental forms of sage, *Salvia officinalis*. *Rosa* 'Cooperi' winds its way up to the top of an Italian cypress. The tiny, creeping fig, *Ficus pumila,* embraces a short staircase. *Rhaphiolepis* x *delacourii* sports its outsized flowers on a terrace near the house and *Elaeagnus commutata* suckers where it will. Most spectacularly Françoise has created a large woodland garden on the hillside behind the house. Is she happy with the the changes she has made? "I am pleased about some things, less about others, but on the whole I feel that the new features are blending well with the old."

Françoise gives credit to the support of designer Pierre Quillier, who introduced her to many Mediterranean plants and local nurseries, and to Marcus Campbell, "a passionate gardener with great visual sense", who came to work in the garden first as a volunteer and later as part-time gardener. Today, Françoise's youngest son Kenneth looks after the garden, which has been recognised as a *jardin remarquable* and now has a Friends of Orvès society to promote its activities. "Hopefully, this will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the place," says Françoise. "And of my parents' memory." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Domaine d'Orvès, Avenue de la Libération,
83160 La Valette, France.
Tel +33 4 94 20 53 25.
Website domainedorves.fr/en
Open March – October, weekends and public holidays, 10am-6pm.
Admission €6 adults, €4 children.



Well-worn steps are edged with irises, agapanthus and exotic grasses, and a succession of enclosures slows your progress inviting you to dally

CHARLES QUEST-RITSON

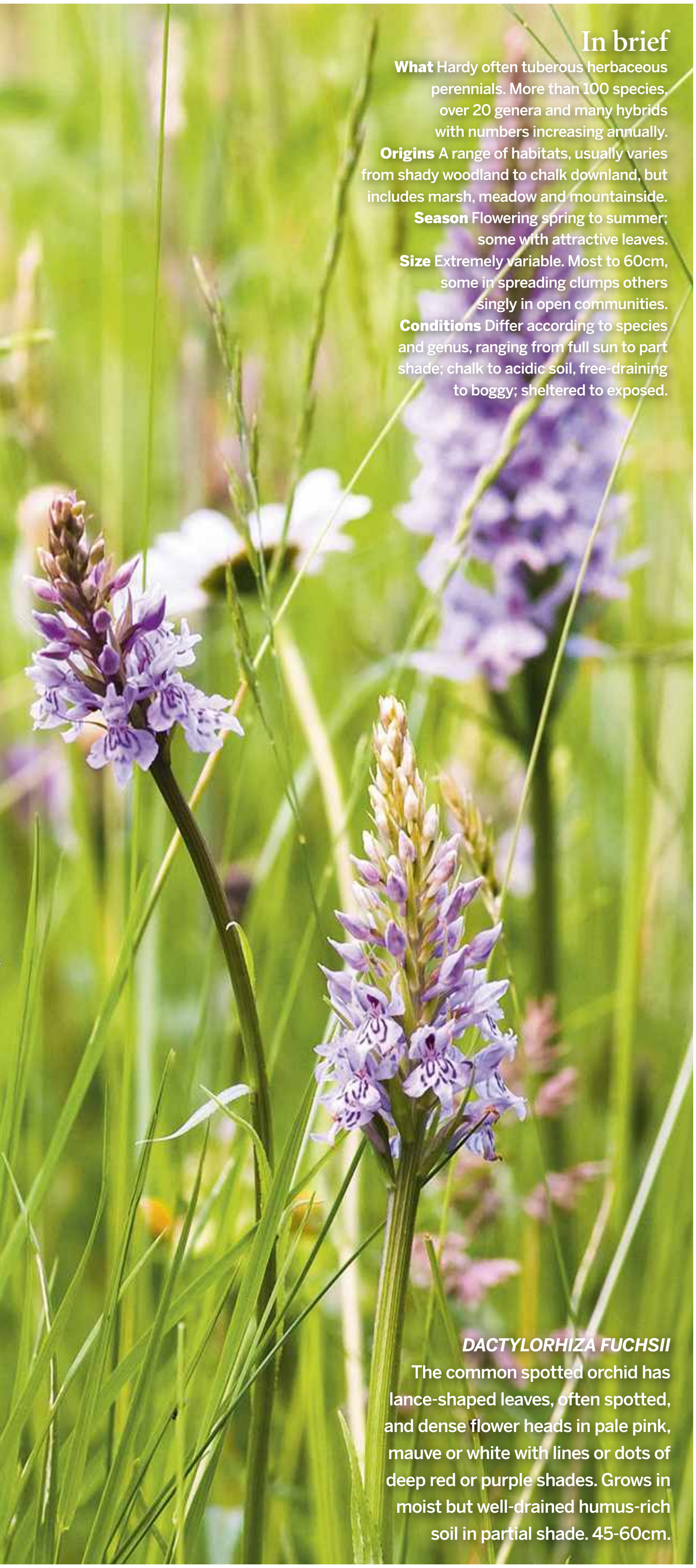
Above The extensive woodland garden behind the house mixes Mediterranean trees and shrubs with a great number of exotics. Here *Melianthus major* luxuriates under native olive trees.

Left Wild *Gladiolus italicus* grow around a statue by Françoise's father, the painter Pierre Deval. Numerous statues create points of interest throughout the many different areas of the garden.

Hardy orchids

Many fall for the delicate beauty of tropical orchids but their hardy cousins are equally enthralling. But be warned, these tiny enchantresses will quickly have you under their spell

WORDS **MATT BIGGS** OPENING IMAGE **RICHARD BLOOM**



In brief

What Hardy often tuberous herbaceous perennials. More than 100 species, over 20 genera and many hybrids with numbers increasing annually.

Origins A range of habitats, usually varies from shady woodland to chalk downland, but includes marsh, meadow and mountainside.

Season Flowering spring to summer; some with attractive leaves.

Size Extremely variable. Most to 60cm, some in spreading clumps others singly in open communities.

Conditions Differ according to species and genus, ranging from full sun to part shade; chalk to acidic soil, free-draining to boggy; sheltered to exposed.

DACTYLORHIZA FUCHSII
The common spotted orchid has lance-shaped leaves, often spotted, and dense flower heads in pale pink, mauve or white with lines or dots of deep red or purple shades. Grows in moist but well-drained humus-rich soil in partial shade. 45-60cm.

GAP PHOTOS/RICHARD BLOOM

Matt Biggs is a Kew-trained gardener, TV presenter and the author of several books. He is also a regular panellist on BBC Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time*.

There's something magical about orchids. The delicacy of the familiar tropical orchids has long beguiled plant lovers; but their hardy relatives, which flourish in temperate zones from Europe to Southern Australia and on subtropical mountains, can be just as enigmatic. I first fell under these hardy orchids' spell at a specialist nursery several years ago. I'd intended to buy two plants but somehow came away with three. Now my rapidly expanding collection thrives in a raised woodland border. Sheltered by a wall and trees, and protected by a layer of free-draining, organic matter at the base, they add an exotic touch to my otherwise traditional woodland planting.

Around 20 genera of this huge family are hardy in the UK, and most of the 108 hardy species are available to buy. One of most delightful is the semi-evergreen *Calanthe tricarinata* (see page 56). With lime-green and brown flowers on long upright spikes, it flourishes in organic-rich soil in damp shade, and works well alongside hostas and ferns, and the emerging butter-yellow fronds of *Athyrium otophorum* var. *okanum*. Its close relatives include *C. striata*, which boasts dense spikes of bright, golden yellow, and *C. nipponica* in green and pale lemon.The *C.* Kozu hybrids, selected for showing, come in a range of vibrant colours with flowers in combinations of white, yellow, terracotta and red or purple. Although the pleated leaves become untidy with age, resist the temptation to remove them until the new growth and flowers start to emerge in spring.

Another genus that offers a riposte to those gardeners who reject orchids on the grounds they're difficult to grow is *Cypripedium*. European breeders have introduced a vast array of hybrids, and this breeding has imparted a robustness that makes them ideal for beginners. Give them a north-facing position or a cool, moist spot with protection from midday summer sun, ▷

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ and they will eventually form sizable clumps. *Cyprideum* hybrids fall into two colour bands: pink to purple and yellow. Both groups offer such a wide choice that the only real dilemma is narrowing your selection to only one.

Among the most highly desirable pink-purple hybrids are *Calanthe* Mont Pinel 'Saint Peter', with pale-purple flowers and deep veining, and *Cypripedium* Ulla Silkens, which displays pure-white petals and a deep-pink, mottled pouch. Yellow hybrids worthy of consideration include *Cypripedium* Hank Small and *C.* Emil hybrids. Both are vigorous, floriferous orchids, with a pale-yellow pouch and burgundy petals, reminiscent of the rare British native, *Cypripedium calceolus* (page 57), but will establish themselves more rapidly, and are easier to flower.

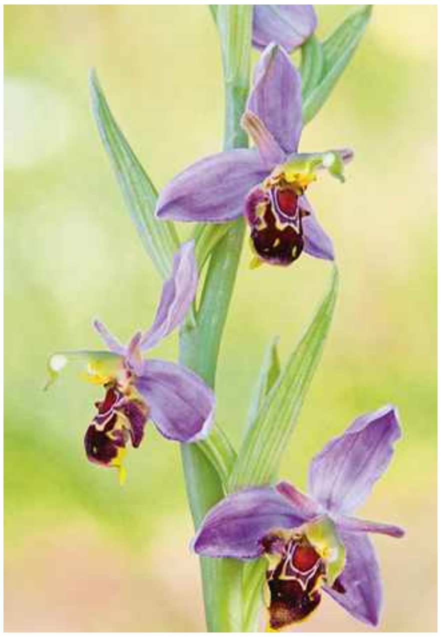
One of my favourites, *Cypripedium kentuckiense*, has a creamy-white pouch and burgundy petals. In my woodland border it looks gorgeous in late spring, alongside the emerging chocolate-and-lime fronds of *Dryopteris wallichiana*, the young, yellow leaves of *Epimedium davidii* and bronze tints on the young leaves of *Beesia calthifolia*. I'm also fond of *Cypripedium reginae* (right), a North American orchid with striking white petals and a cerise-pink pouch (there is also a beautiful pure-white form: *C. reginae* f. *album*). It grows near watercourses with its shoots above the water table and the roots below. In my garden it shares a boggy patch with blue-flowered *Primula capitata* a combination that always attracts comment.

There are many, many more hardy orchids – too many to include more than a fraction here – but one other genus worthy of a mention is *Bletilla*, with its pleated leaves. The most widely available species, *Bletilla striata* (page 55), has deep-pink-to-purple flowers; the cultivar *B. striata* 'Albostriata' has attractive white margins to the leaves while *B. striata* 'Soryu' has delightful mauve flowers. All thrive best in full sun but, although they will tolerate part shade in rich, well-drained soil, they won't tolerate water logging or frost.

With so much choice we can only skim the surface of these bewitching beauties, and urge you to find room for one in your border. Except once you've fallen under their spell, one will never be enough.

- Matt's recommendations for hardy orchids continue over the next six pages.

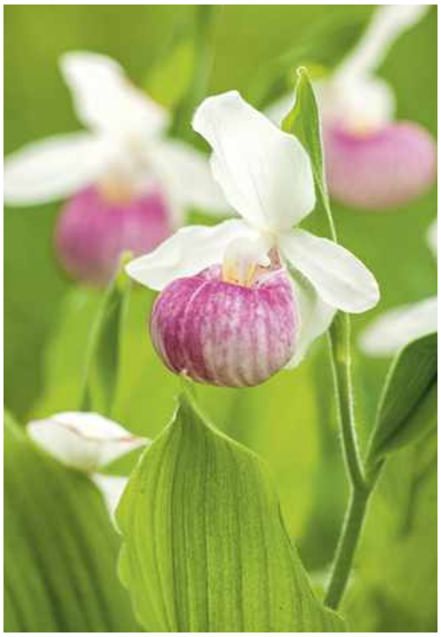
Meadow or boggy ground



ALEE BEEL / ALAMY

OPHRYS APIFERA

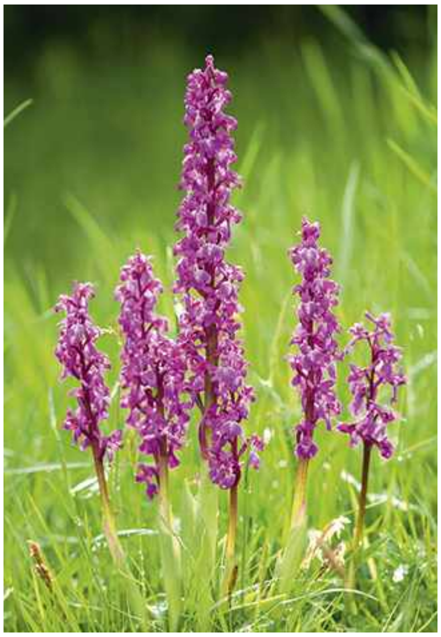
Also called the bee orchid for its intricately patterned lip. Requires alkaline soil in carefully managed grassland. It's worth growing this small-flowered beauty in a pot so you can adore it at eye level. 15-30cm. USDA 7b-10b[†].



CAROL HEESEN / ALAMY

CYPRIPEDIUM REGINAE

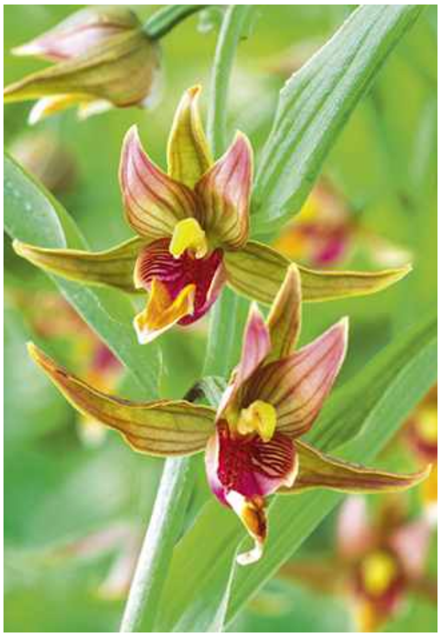
Widely available and ideal in boggy ground by a pond or in a pot with drainage holes in the sides. A large clump of these white and candy pink flowers makes a splendid feature. 60-90cm. AGM[*]. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8a.



STEVE TAYLOR ARPS / ALAMY

ORCHIS MASCULA

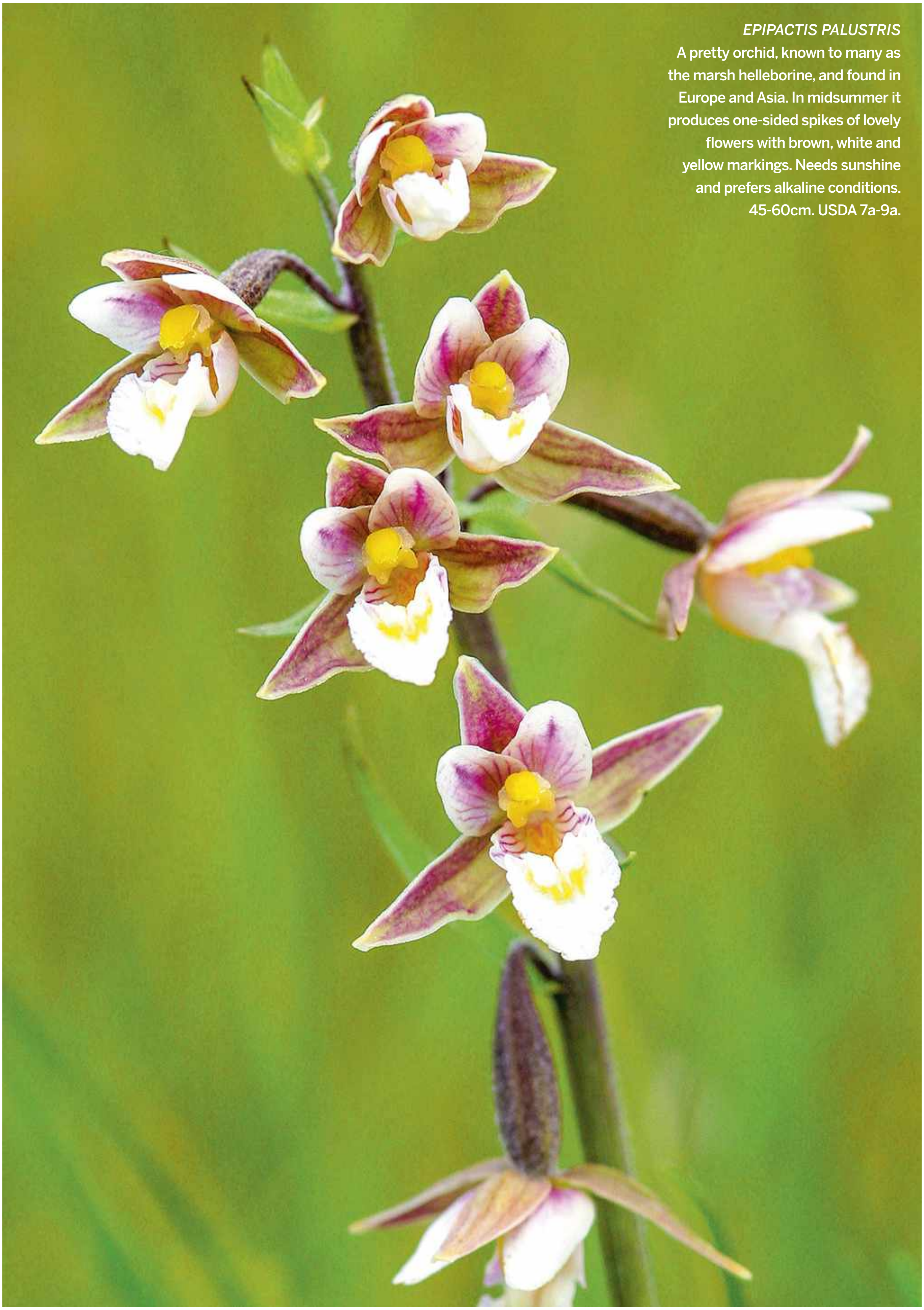
Known as the early purple orchid for good reason as it produces spikes of up to 50 deep-purple flowers from as early as April through to July. Very adaptable, it grows in meadows, woodland borders or rockeries. 15-22cm.



CHRISTOPHER BURROWS / ALAMY

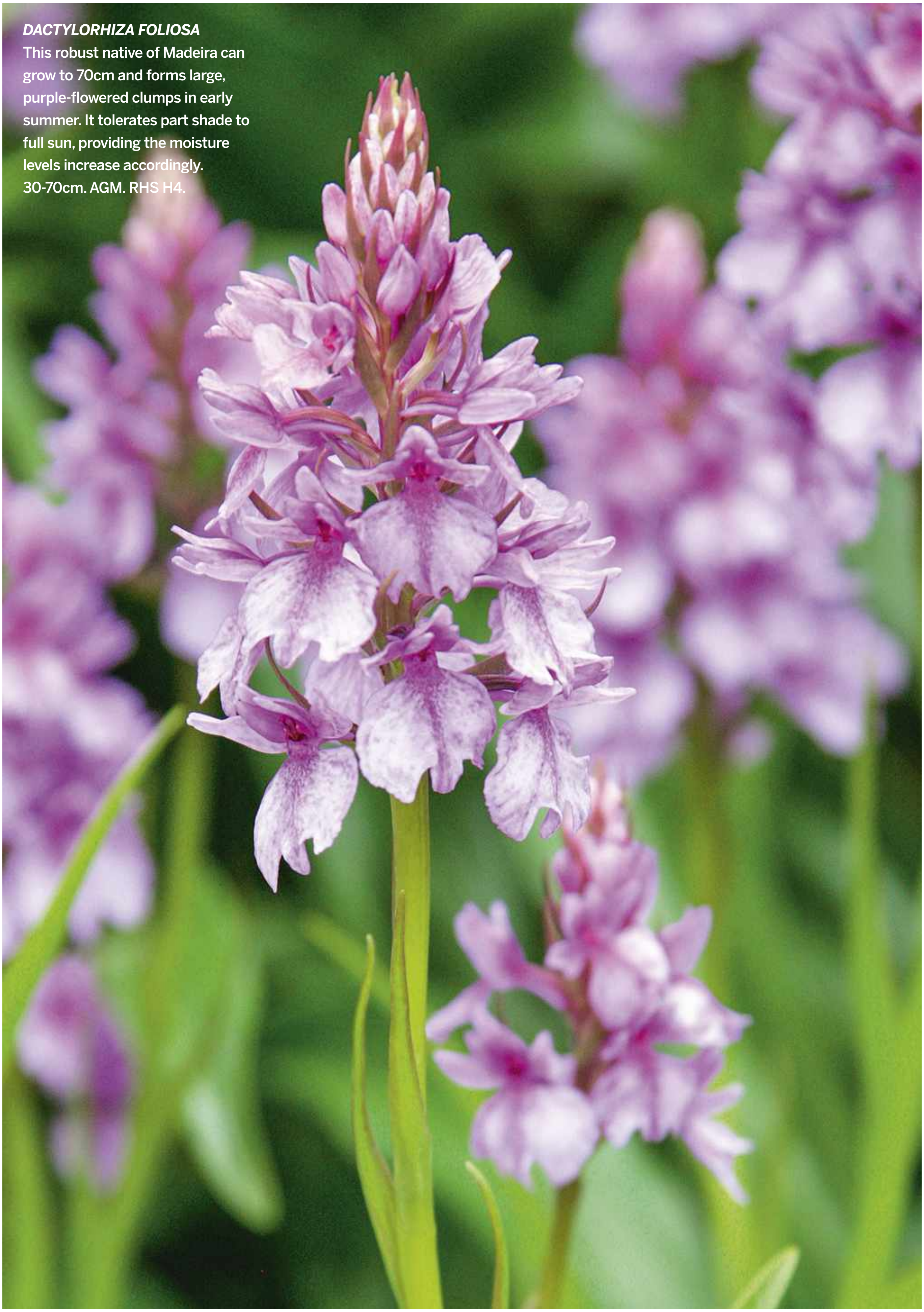
EPIPACTIS GIGANTEA

Thrives in boggy ground and is good by a pond. Although it prefers full sun, it will tolerate some shade. The attractive, pink-striped flowers are so complex, they are worth looking at under a magnifying glass. 45-60cm.



EPIPACTIS PALUSTRIS
A pretty orchid, known to many as the marsh helleborine, and found in Europe and Asia. In midsummer it produces one-sided spikes of lovely flowers with brown, white and yellow markings. Needs sunshine and prefers alkaline conditions. 45-60cm. USDA 7a-9a.

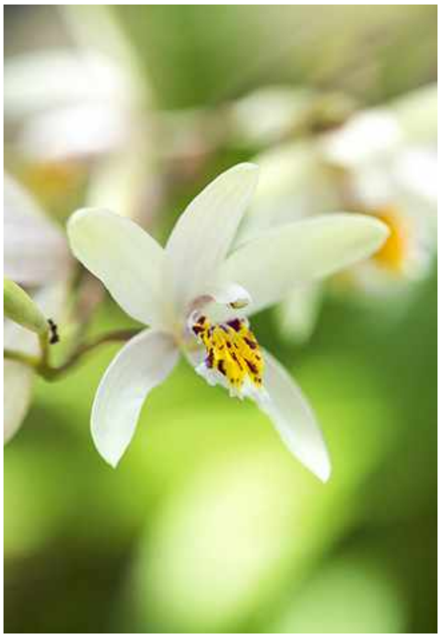
DAVID J SLATER / ALAMY



DACTYLORHIZA FOLIOSA
This robust native of Madeira can grow to 70cm and forms large, purple-flowered clumps in early summer. It tolerates part shade to full sun, providing the moisture levels increase accordingly. 30-70cm. AGM. RHS H4.

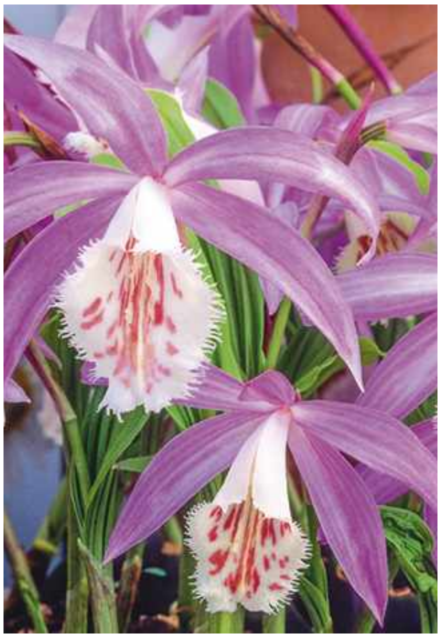
FLORAPIX / ALAMY

Garden and container



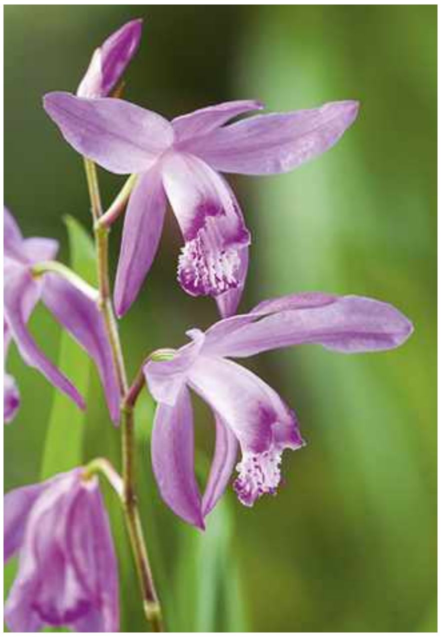
GAP PHOTOS/TIM GAINEY

BLETILLA OCHRACEA
Needs moist, rich soil and sunshine. Produces delicate flowers June – July. Keep dry in winter by covering with a tile, or pane of glass or Perspex. Or grow in a pot and overwinter in a cool, frost-free place. 15-30cm. USDA 6a-10a.



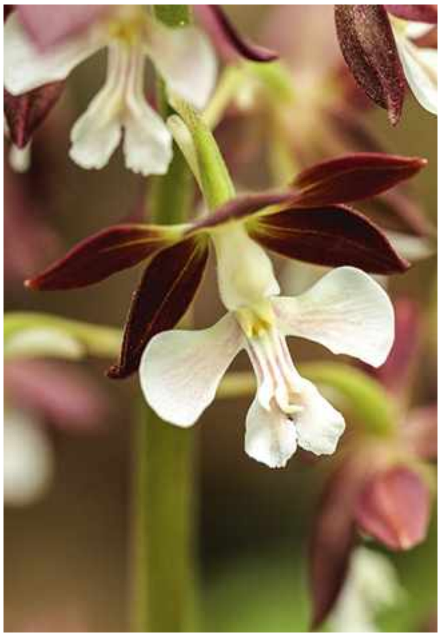
JOHN GLOVER / ALAMY

PLEIONE FORMOSANA
Each pseudobulb produces a single, pretty flower, in colours ranging from white to subtle shades of pink with attractive markings. Ideal for pots, they need to be kept frost free over winter. 15cm. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 10a-11.



WILDLIFE GMBH / ALAMY

BLETILLA STRIATA
A pink-flowered delight that is widely available. It needs sunshine to flourish and a deep mulch to protect it from winter's frosts. It also dislikes winter wet. 45-60cm AGM. RHS H4, USDA 6a-10b.



F_STUDIO / SHUTTERSTOCK

CALANTHE DISCOLOR
Delicate flowers, with cream, mahogany and pink markings, appear from late spring to early summer and are a joy. Use a large pot and they will happily spread to fill the space. 15-30cm. USDA 7a-11.

Cultivation

Orchids, even hardy ones, are sensitive to their habitat and have specific needs when it comes to moisture levels, drainage, aspect and shade. As with most plants the key to successful planting is to try and replicate the growing conditions of their native habitat in the garden.

Genera that spread by rhizomes or pseudobulbs, such as *Epipactis*, *Cypripedium*, *Bletilla* and *Calanthe*, die back in winter. Some tuberous genera, such as *Dactylorhiza*, produce a rosette of leaves in spring then flower in late spring and summer. Others, such as *Orchis* and *Ophrys*, produce a rosette in autumn, take advantage of winter rain, and then flower in spring or early summer, avoiding summer droughts by becoming dormant. Although hardy orchids prefer a border position, most will grow in pots, allowing you to move them to a frost-free spot when temperatures fall.

Most orchids will benefit from feeding, with a high-potash fertiliser at 25-50 per cent strength during the growing season. *Pleione*, however, require a balanced general fertiliser at 25 per cent strength until August, followed by a 25 per cent high-potash fertiliser, and *Epipactis* do not need any feeding. All need a 10cm layer of bark, straw or similar mulch to protect them over winter from frost.

Pests and diseases

- Watch out for **slugs and snails**, especially in early spring. If you can't face picking these off by hand at night, opt for biological controls, such as nematodes, traps, copper bands and ferric phosphate slug pellets, or encourage natural predators, such as ground beetles, toads and thrushes.
- **Aphids** can also be a problem on young shoots and flower buds. Use contact insecticides based on natural substances, such as fatty acids, squash by hand, encourage predators, such as hoverfly, ladybird and lacewing larvae. Avoid pesticides as they may not have been tested for use on orchids.

Growing in containers

If you're growing in a pot you should ideally use a specialist compost mix. Some have a wider range of ingredients than others and it's best to find the simplest recipe for your needs. Orchid Accessories (**orchidaccessories.co.uk**) and Orchid Supplies (**orchidsupplies.co.uk**) both offer several options. Most orchids need a moisture-retentive, organic-rich mix with perlite and grit to improve drainage and prevent stagnation. I'd recommend using similar for backfilling when planting in borders. Alternatively, you can 'plunge' pots (sink pots up to the rim in the soil), if they need to be overwintered indoors.

Discover more

You can find out more about growing hardy orchids from the Hardy Orchid Society (**hardyorchidsociety.org.uk**). There are also several good books on the subject, including:

Growing Hardy Orchids by Philip Seaton, Margaret Ramsay, Phillip Cribb, Grace Prendergast and John Haggar (Kew Publishing, 2011).

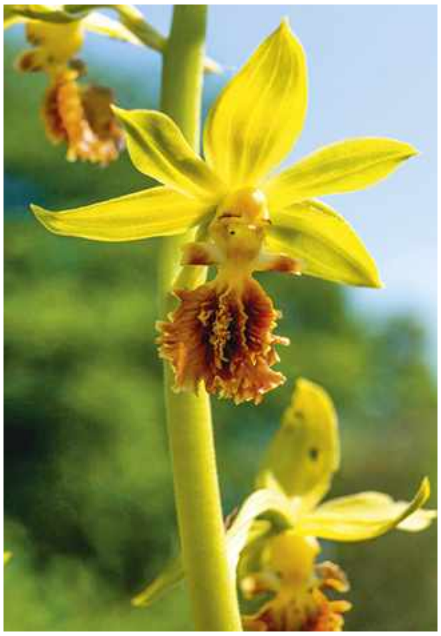
Hardy Orchids by Phillip Cribb and Christopher Bailes (Batsford, 1991).

Where to see and buy

Orchids are still threatened in the wild, so only buy from reputable nurseries and cultivated sources. Remember it is illegal to dig them up from the wild.

- **Alphabet Orchids**
  Tel 01622 891894,
  alphabetorchids.com
- **Edrom Nurseries**
  Edrom Nursery, Eyemouth,
  Berwickshire TD14 5TZ
  Tel 01890 771386,
  edrom-nurseries.co.uk
- **Frosch Exclusive Perennials (mailorder only)**
  cypripedium.de
- **Heritage Orchids (mailorder only)**
  heritageorchids.co.uk
- **Laneside Hardy Orchids**
  74 Croston Road, Garstang,
  Preston PR3 1HR
  Tel 01995 605537,
  lanesidehardyorchids.com

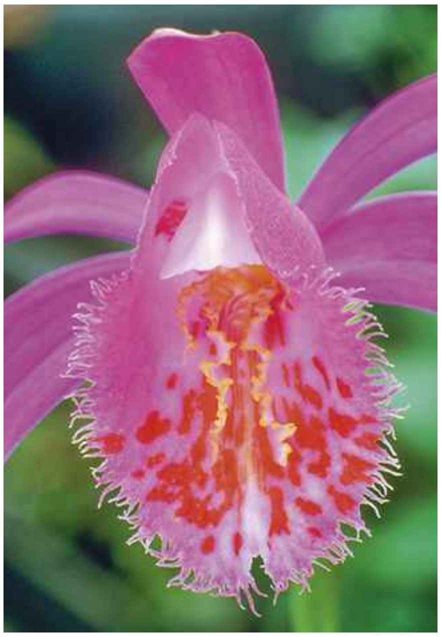
Woodland



HUGH WELFORD / ALAMY

CALANTHE TRICARINATA

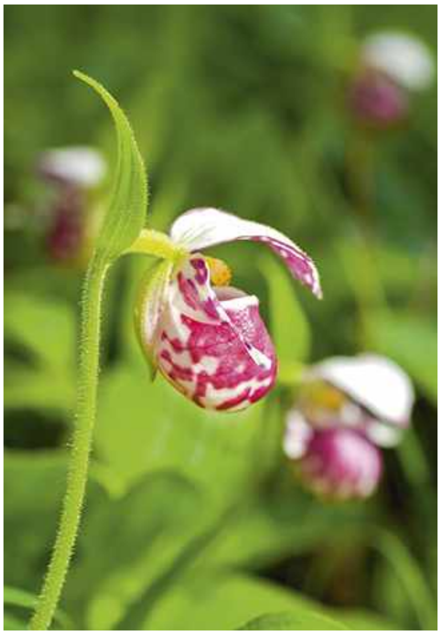
This vigorous species, native to the Himalayas and southeast Asia, tolerates deep shade and bears several large flowers on spikes. Remains evergreen in mild winters but needs protection from hard frosts. 30-45cm. USDA 6a-8b.



HOLMES GARDEN PHOTOS / ALAMY

***PLEIONE* TONGARIRO**

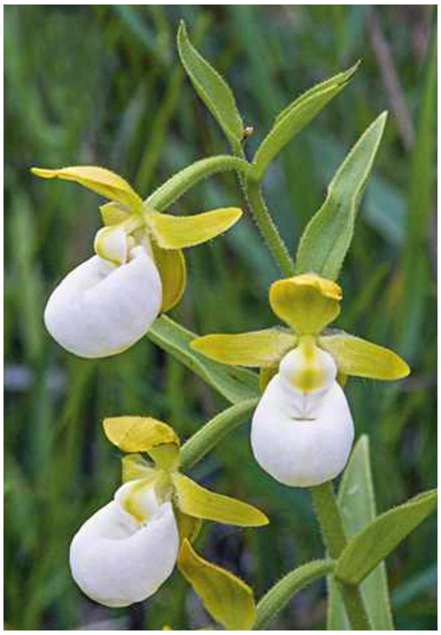
Has long-lasting, brightly coloured flowers, often producing two blooms per stem. Mine has survived several Hertfordshire winters in the shelter of a rhododendron, which also keeps it on the dry side in winter. 15cm.



KIRSANOV VALERIY VLADIMIROVICH / SHUTTERSTOCK

CYPRIPEDIUM GUTTATUM

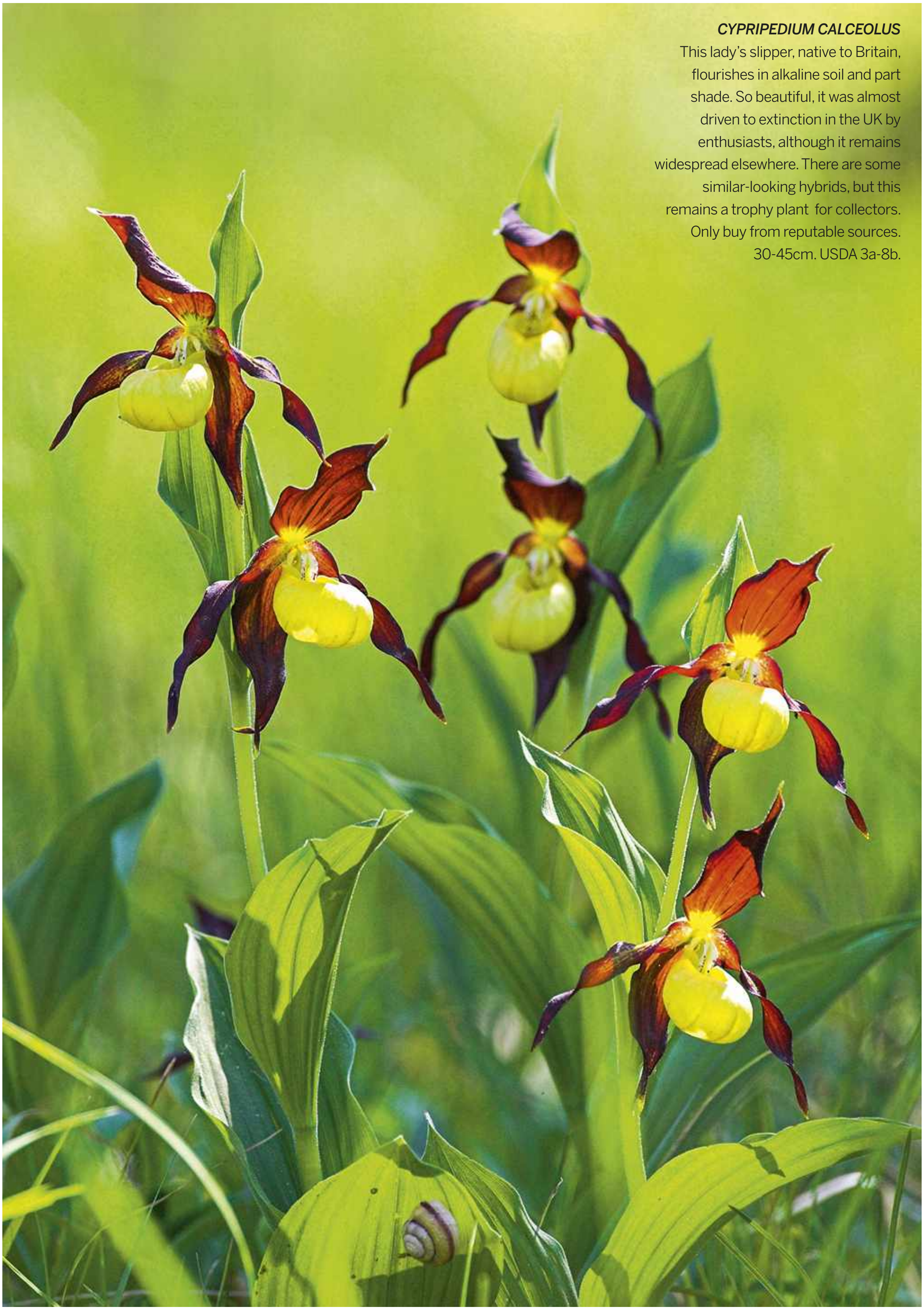
Known as the spotted lady's slipper, this striking orchid is rare in cultivation, but grows well. It relishes moist, acidic, free-draining soil in part shade, and needs reliably cold winters. 15-30cm. USDA 2a-5a.



KEVIN SCHAFER / GETTY

CYPRIPEDIUM CALIFORNICUM

A rare orchid native to California and Oregon. Needs plenty of moisture during the growing season but should be kept dry in winter, so cover in similar way to *Bletilla ochracea* (see page 55). 60-90cm. USDA 8a-9b.



CYPRIPEDIUM CALCEOLUS
This lady's slipper, native to Britain, flourishes in alkaline soil and part shade. So beautiful, it was almost driven to extinction in the UK by enthusiasts, although it remains widespread elsewhere. There are some similar-looking hybrids, but this remains a trophy plant for collectors. Only buy from reputable sources. 30-45cm. USDA 3a-8b.

TBKMEDIA.DE / ALAMY

Midori Shintani

The head gardener of Tokachi Millennium Forest did not know her calling at first, but she eventually found her path to a place where she truly belongs

WORDS JODIE JONES PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Midori Shintani is, she thinks, the luckiest person in the world. She has been head gardener of the renowned Tokachi Millennium Forest in Hokkaido, northern Japan, since 2008 and has no intention of moving anywhere else.

The brainchild of entrepreneur Mitsushige Hayashi, the master plan was created by Fumiako Takano in collaboration with Dan Pearson, who also designed the gardens for which he won a prestigious Society of Garden Designers award. These, and the wider forest park, are maintained and managed by Midori.

"She is essential to our work here," says Dan. "She is a gift. It was perfect timing, she and the garden coming together." Midori's journey to Hokkaido, from her home town in mainland Japan, was not straightforward, however.

She was born in 1972 in Fukui province and grew up in the countryside where, as a little girl, she loved to go out with her two older brothers and hunt for frogs. "I was quite wild, in that country way," she says. "But I also learned the tea ceremony, *ikebana* [flower arranging] and calligraphy. And my mother encouraged me to experience different cultures, to speak different languages."

At the age of ten, Midori asked to go to a boarding school because, she says, "I just felt I had to". She was not born with a vocation to garden but she was born with a strong need to find a path and pursue it. However, she fell very ill as a teenager and spent a lot of time in hospital. "My father noticed how much I loved reading landscape architecture books in bed and suggested I study horticulture at university." Unwittingly, he had set Midori on the path to Hokkaido.

"I enjoyed the course but I still did not know what I should become. For 11 years I struggled to choose my path. I worked at a designer's office, a rose specialist and an art gallery. At some point I started thinking about being a gardener. But I needed a place to learn and I didn't care how far away that was."

This was the late 1990s, when the English garden style was hugely popular in Japan. "But I was not ready to go to England. I would have been overwhelmed by the deep gardening culture. I needed to become a professional first. Then I remembered reading about Rosendal's Gardens in Sweden."

She signed up for language school to secure a visa, jumped on a plane and walked into Rosendal to ask for work. "I was 30 years old, I couldn't speak Swedish and the garden was closed for the winter but I knew it was the place for me." She had to apply five times before they overlooked the language barrier and finally offered her a position. "It was a wonderful experience. The Swedish have an interesting attitude to nature, shaped by an extreme climate that keeps man in his place."

In 2004, she returned to Japan feeling she had more to learn. "First I joined a landscaping company. It was the hardest work I've ever done – my foreman was strict – but it was good for me. After two years there, I spent a year working in a plant nursery. Ideally I would have stayed three years in each job but I was in my thirties so I needed to get the experience more quickly." At the same time, Midori began to look around for a garden to 'belong' to.

She first read about the Millennium Forest in a small news story. "There was little information but I wanted to be part of it." Within a month, she started work as head gardener. "This garden is a bridge between humans and nature. We use minimum tools, minimum management, but maximum vision. We have a mission to introduce a new garden movement. The potential is exciting."

The task is also immense. "My job is not simply to create a beautiful garden. We must also present a lifestyle that visitors will want to recreate at home." Though she works long hours through spring and summer, the winters in Hokkaido are too harsh to garden outside so Midori travels during these frozen months.

For the past few years, her travels have included a sabbatical in the UK at Great Dixter, working alongside head gardener Fergus Garrett. "I have learned so much from Fergus about how to create a warm place that will educate and inspire people. It is all about sharing my specific vision. My past, present and future have come together since I arrived here. I will work here until someone arrives who I can hand the garden on to. And then I would like to retire here. This really is the place where I can fully be myself." □

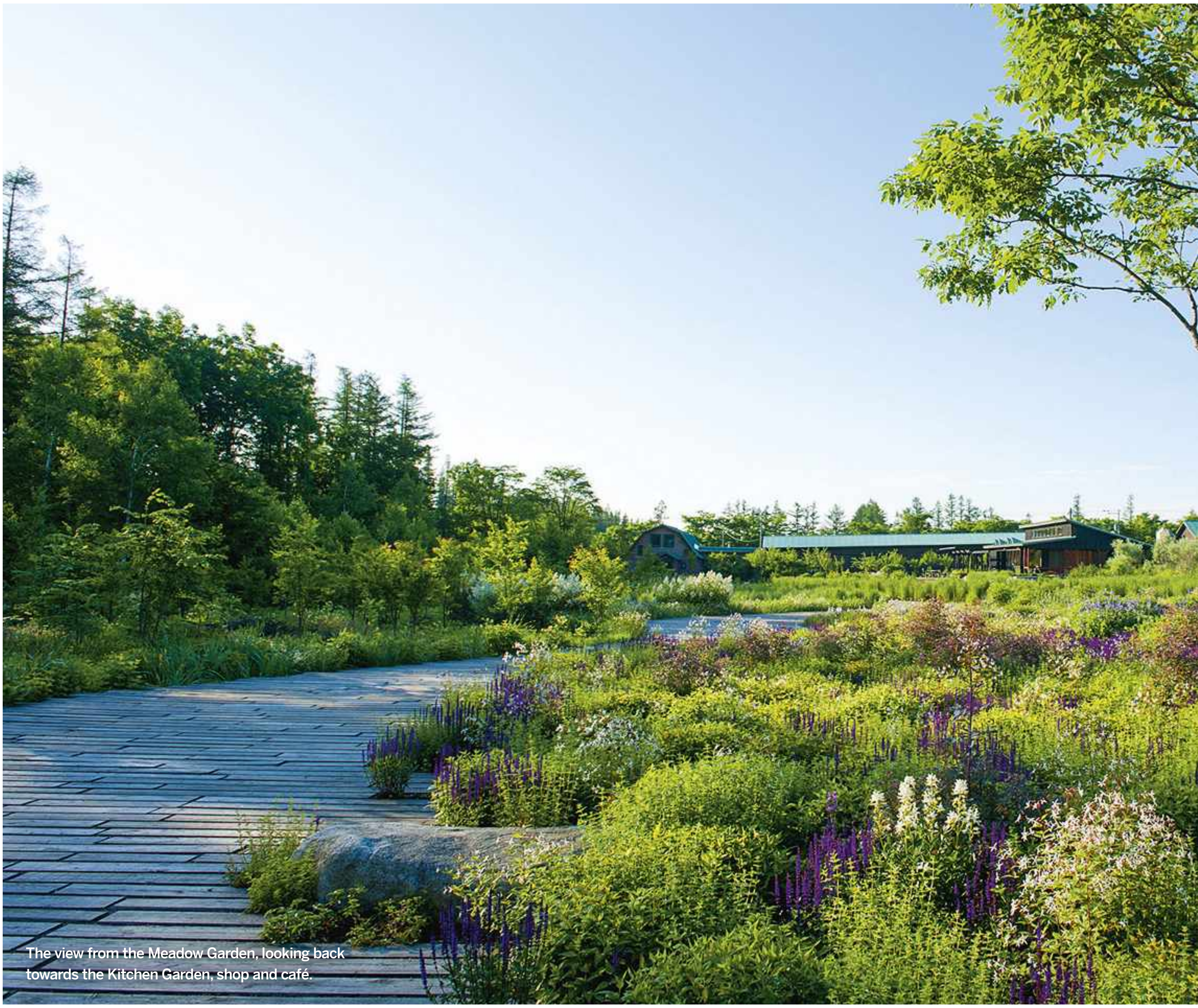
USEFUL INFORMATION

You can read more out about the Tokachi Millennium Forest and discover how designer Dan Pearson creates his naturalistic plantings in the Forest's Meadow Garden in the feature overleaf.

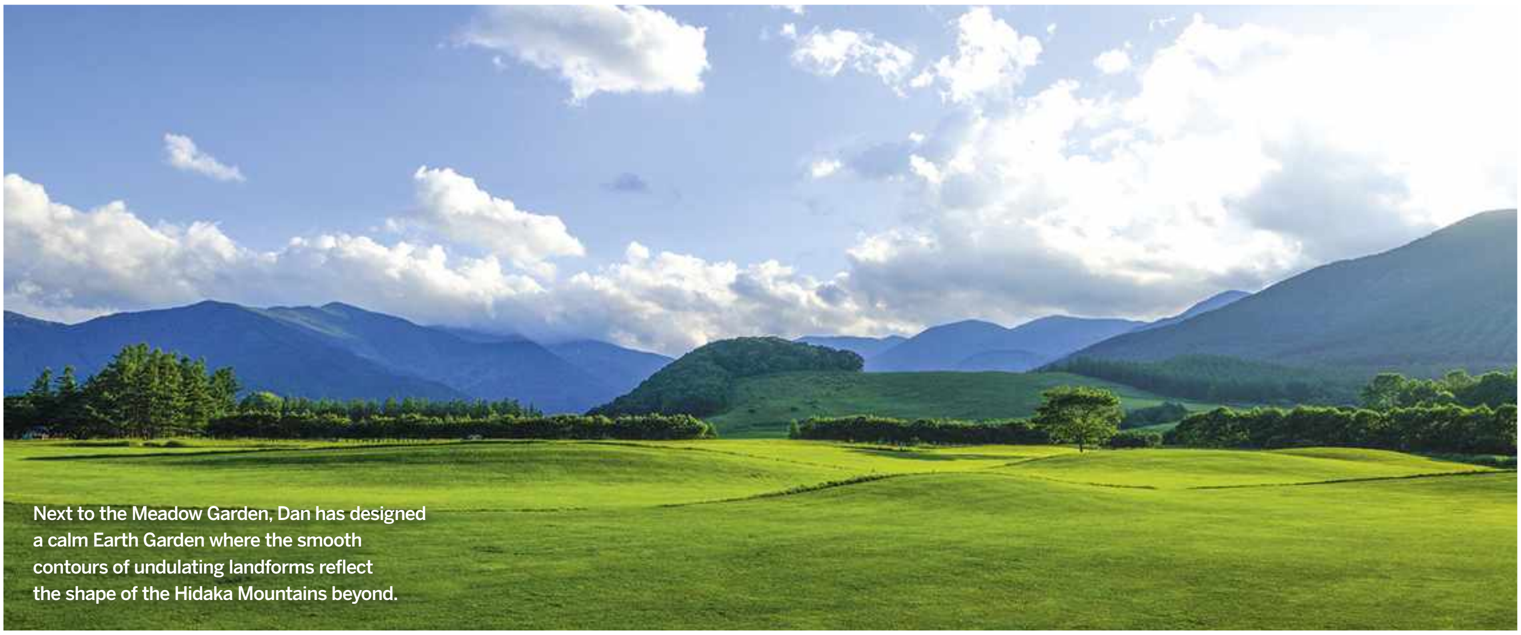
NEXT MONTH

Hans Kramer, nurseryman at De Hessenhof in the Netherlands.

> *My job is not simply to create a beautiful garden. We must also present a lifestyle that visitors will want to recreate at home*



The view from the Meadow Garden, looking back towards the Kitchen Garden, shop and café.

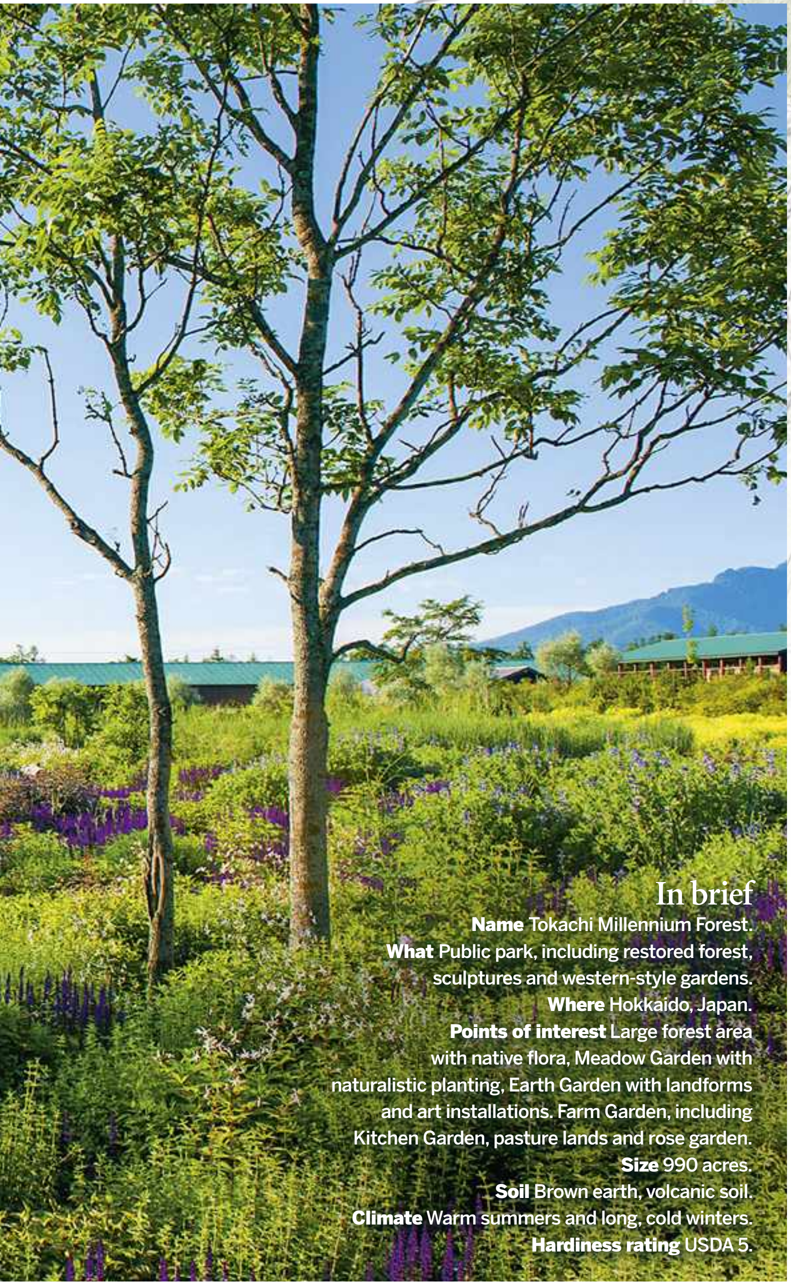


Next to the Meadow Garden, Dan has designed a calm Earth Garden where the smooth contours of undulating landforms reflect the shape of the Hidaka Mountains beyond.

Into the woods

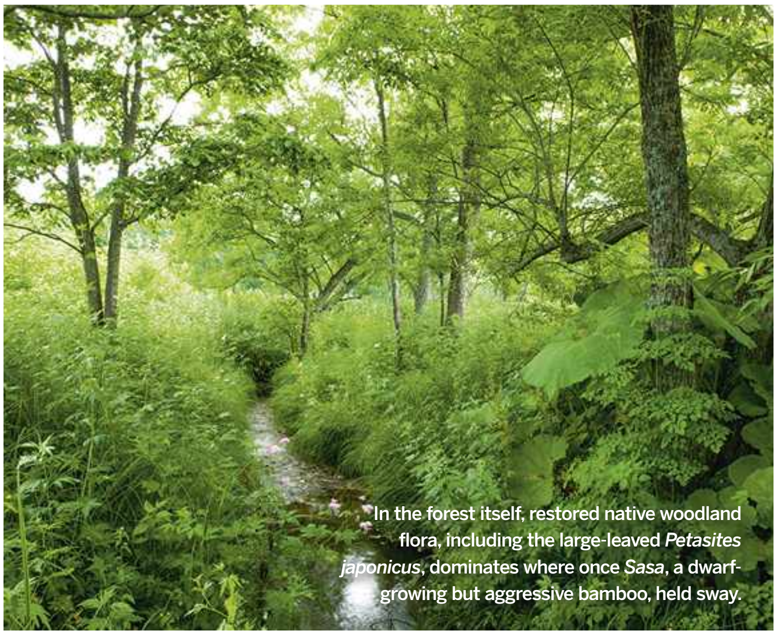
Using innovative planting techniques inspired by nature, designer Dan Pearson has created a remarkable garden that welcomes visitors to the Tokachi Millennium Forest

WORDS **NOËL KINGSBURY** PHOTOGRAPHS **SHOGO OIZUMI**



In brief

Name Tokachi Millennium Forest.
What Public park, including restored forest, sculptures and western-style gardens.
Where Hokkaido, Japan.
Points of interest Large forest area with native flora, Meadow Garden with naturalistic planting, Earth Garden with landforms and art installations. Farm Garden, including Kitchen Garden, pasture lands and rose garden.
Size 990 acres.
Soil Brown earth, volcanic soil.
Climate Warm summers and long, cold winters.
Hardiness rating USDA 5.



In the forest itself, restored native woodland flora, including the large-leaved *Petasites japonicus*, dominates where once *Sasa*, a dwarf-growing but aggressive bamboo, held sway.

To many people outside of Japan, Hokkaido – Japan's vast northernmost island – can seem like another world. It can feel that way for many Japanese too, but it offers a sense of space often lacking in that densely populated country. Here winters are long and cold and the growing season short; but warm summers, wide open landscapes, mountains and extensive forests mean it is fast becoming a popular holiday destination.

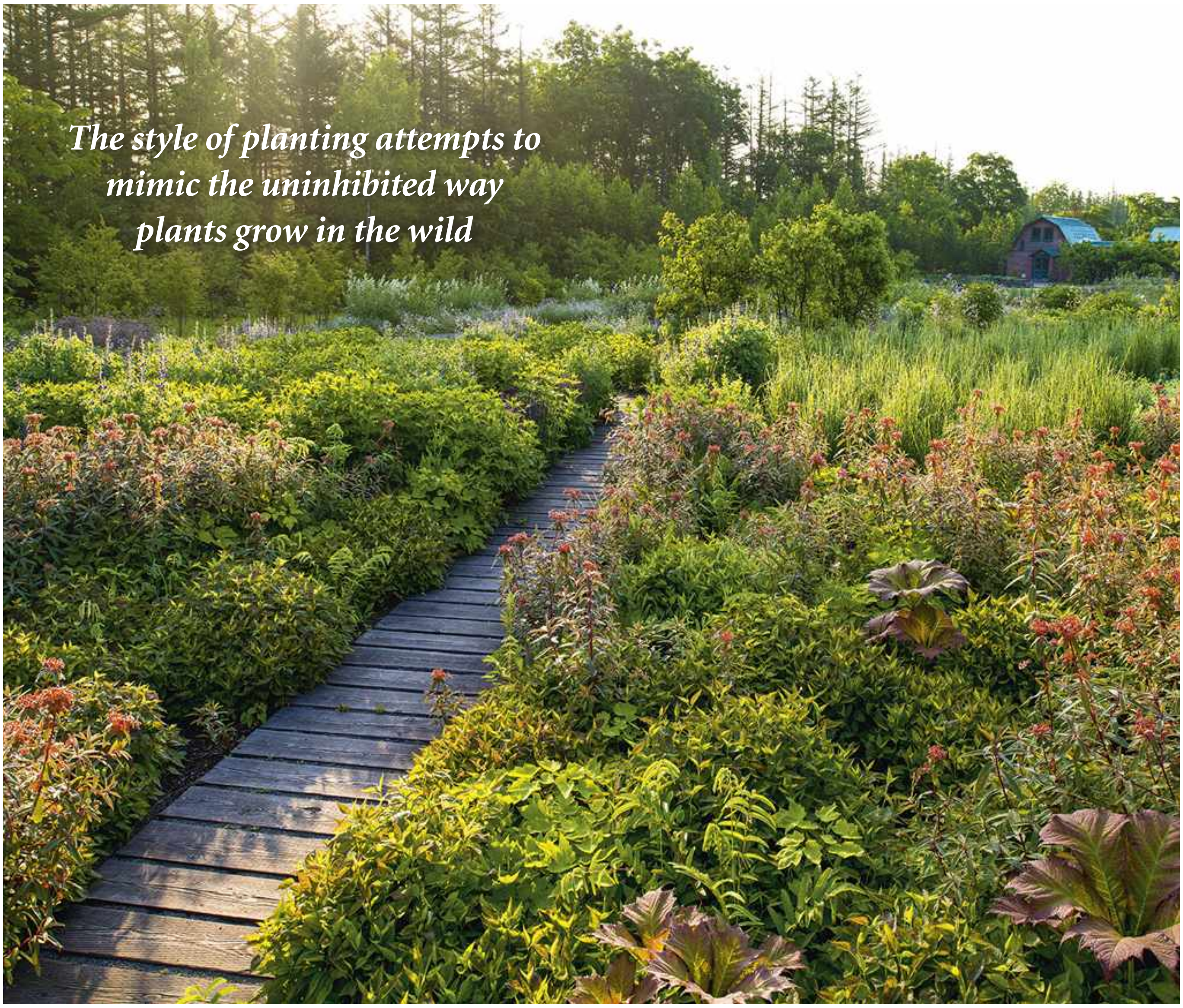
In 1992 local newspaper proprietor, Mitsushige Hayashi acquired around 990 acres of land here to re-establish a forest. Although he was partly motivated by a desire to make his newspaper business carbon neutral, he also wanted to help restore the area's natural ecosystems and create an area that would be sustainable for the next 1,000 years. He also planned to open the park to the public and offer tourists to the island the opportunity to reconnect with nature.

To realise his vision Mr Hayashi turned to the landscape designer Fumiaki Takano, but knowing that Japan is a very urban country where much of the population has little if any experience of wild countryside, they felt the forest needed a series of gardens to act as stepping stones from the familiar to the unfamiliar. A traditional Japanese garden, with its stylised representation of nature, wouldn't be wild enough. Something more naturalistic and spontaneous was needed and for this Takano approached the celebrated UK garden designer Dan Pearson.

Part of Dan's brief was to create a space that would be colourful and ordered enough to be instantly recognised as a garden, but wild enough for visitors to make the connection to the natural environment beyond. The gardens lead on to a series of undulating landforms – also designed by Dan – then sculptures and installations. Further still, visitors can explore paths into the forest. Dan's answer was the Meadow Garden and over the next eight pages we take a look at how his varied and highly sophisticated planting schemes for this garden have evolved.

Planting area 1

This first planting area (highlighted in the plan below) evokes wild-flower plant communities by interweaving three different plant mixes in smaller areas that range in size from one to five metres across. Mixes are placed on either side of the wooden paths to create a feeling of continuity.

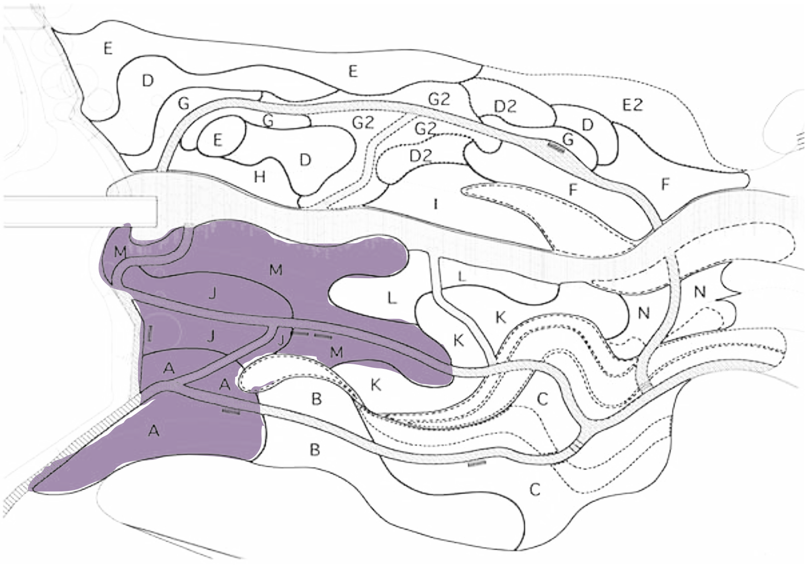


The style of planting attempts to mimic the uninhibited way plants grow in the wild

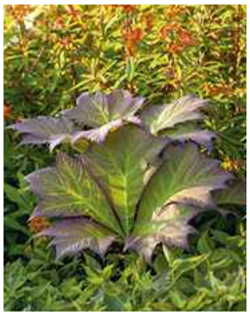
The Meadow Garden comprises an area of around three acres near the entrance to the Tokachi Millennium Forest. Traditionally, with larger plantings, such as this, designers group individuals of one variety together in clumps then repeat them for a sense of cohesion, however, the rising interest in more naturalistic approaches in planting design have led towards 'intermingling'. This style of planting attempts to mimic the uninhibited way plants grow in the wild by densely mixing carefully researched plant combinations together and setting them out at random. At Tokachi, Dan has developed his own technique for intermingling. "Having spent several years working on the park's wider landscape I was able to see it at different seasons and became very interested in creating layered plantings. It was important for me that the Meadow Garden relates to and emulates the waves of plants that live together during the short growing season in the forest." He also hoped that combining native flora and ornamental plants in this naturalistic way would help the visiting public to make a

▷

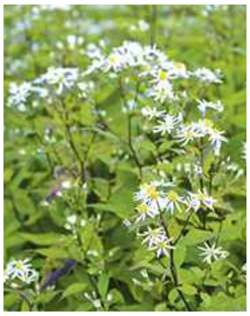
Plan of planting mixes in the Meadow Garden



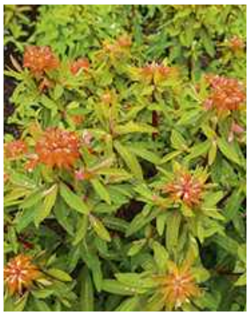
MIX A



Rodgersia podophylla 'Braunlaub'
Its bronze foliage harmonises well with the orange flowers of *Euphorbia griffithii*. Small flowers appear in early summer. Loves moisture and liable to sun scorch. 60cm.

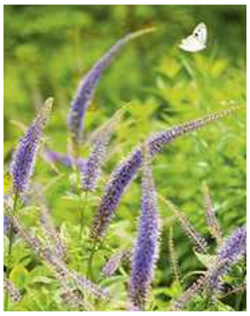


Aster divaricatus
Has delicate white flowers on wiry dark stems in late summer and early autumn. It's tolerant of light shade and easy to grow in any reasonable soil. Moderately fast spreading growth. 80cm.

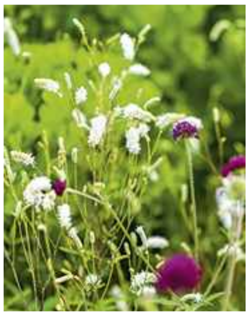


Euphorbia griffithii 'Fireglow'
A key plant that gently connects yellow and red colour schemes; early summer flowering. Full sun in any reasonable soil, spreads erratically to eventually form large patches. 1m.

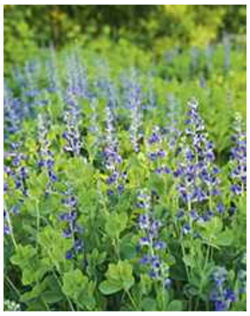
MIX J



Veronicastrum sibiricum var. _japonicum_
Flowers in early summer but with good seedhead structure for winter. Has distinct tidy foliage with strongly upright stems. Needs fertile soil in sun. 1.5m.

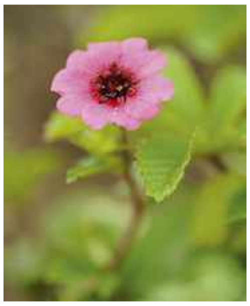


Sanguisorba tenuifolia var. _alba_
Attractive foliage prominent from spring with large sprays of white flower heads in late summer. Any reasonable soil in sun, prefers moisture. Forms a tight clump. 1.5m.

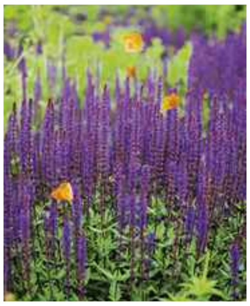


Baptisia australis
Indigo-blue flowers in early summer, very distinctive foliage with expansive shrub-like habit. Attractive dark seedpods. Full sun, fertile soil, slowly clump forming. 1.5m. AGM*.

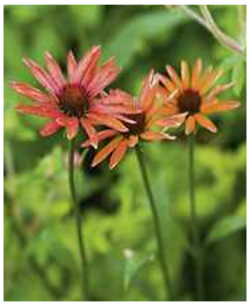
MIX M



Potentilla nepalensis 'Miss Willmott'
Pink flowers in early summer grow on sprawling stems with attractive divided leaves. Happy in any reasonable soil in sun. Slowly forms clumps. 40cm.



Salvia nemorosa 'Caradonna'
Flowers in early summer, with multiple flower spikes and can repeat bloom if deadheaded. Good in any reasonable soil in sun. Drought-tolerant and good on limestone. Slowly forms clumps. 60cm. AGM.



Echinacea 'Hot Summer'
A key plant for succession after *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna' – flowers in late summer and has good seedheads. Any reasonable soil in sun. Forms tight, short-lived clumps. 1.2m.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

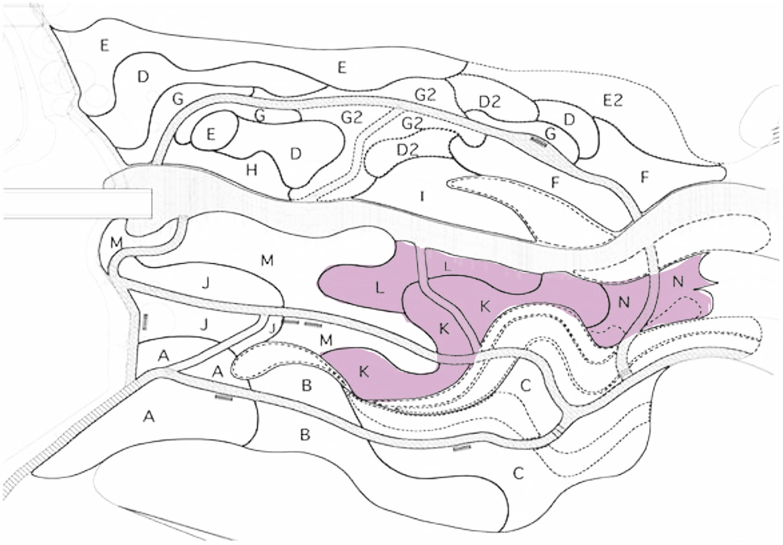
Planting area 2

Each of the plant mixes are grouped around a broad colour theme. In this area bands of the grass *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' have been woven between different colour zones to minimise clashes. Its long season and strongly vertical habit makes it ideal for screening.

Dan formulated 17 different mixes, each composed of around half a dozen species

▷ connection between the garden and the way things work in the wild. In addition, Hokkaido, with its cooler climate, provided Dan with the opportunity to grow perennials that do not flourish on the mainland. Dan formulated 17 different mixes, each composed of around half a dozen species, which he planted in areas of varying size either side of a series of wooden pathways. "The mixes are designed to have the same plants on either side to get a sense of walking through the plants," explains Dan. Each mix includes plants that Dan calls 'emergents', which stand above the other species and might include *Actaea* or *Cephalaria gigantea*; 'space-fillers', such as *Rodgersia* or *Aster divaricatus*; low-level 'procumbents', such as *Geranium* or *Potentilla nepalensis* 'Miss Willmott'; and 'treats', eye-catching splashes of unexpected colour or form, such as *Paeonia*.

Once Dan had worked out what he wanted to include in each mix, he used his extensive knowledge of how plants grow to work out what percentages of each type of plant he would need – emergents, for ▷



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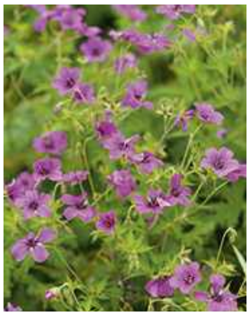
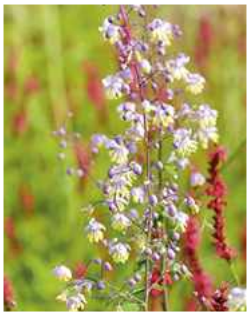
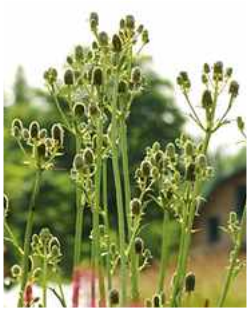


***Geranium* Patricia (= ‘Brempat’)**
Lovely magenta flowers in early to midsummer. Likes any reasonable soil in sun or light shade. Moderately spreading clump, good ground cover. 60cm. AGM.

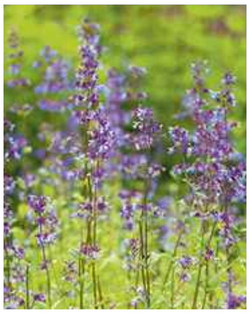


Thalictrum delavayi
Delicate sprays of pink flowers in midsummer on upright stems, has similarly refined, multiply divided foliage. Likes sun, but dislikes drought. Forms a tight clump. 1.5m. AGM.

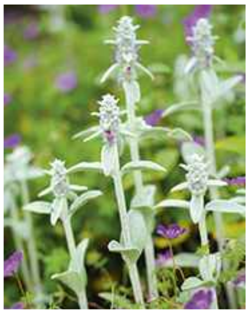


Eryngium agavifolium
Its deeply toothed (but soft), dark-green leaf rosettes and thimble-like flowers, create a delicate top to sturdy, upright stems. Prefers moister soils in sun. Forms a slowly spreading clump. 1.5m.

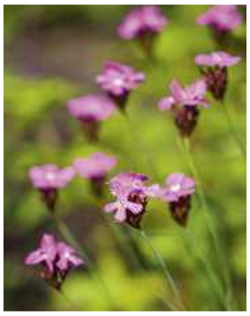
MIX L



***Nepeta transcaucasica* ‘Blue Infinity’**
Dark-blue flowers in spikes, form on dark stems. Can provide excellent autumn colour. Prefers sun but happy in most soils and is clump forming. 70cm.

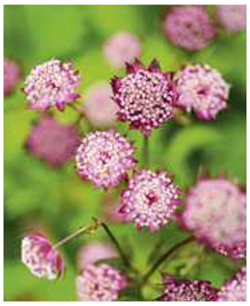


Stachys byzantina
Produces very woolly, silvery leaves, but rather insignificant flowers. Its foliage is most effective in spring. Likes sun and any reasonable soil. Forms moderately spreading clumps. 60cm.

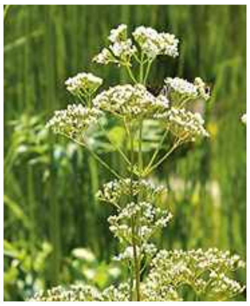


Dianthus carthusianorum
These intensely coloured flowers are best left to emerge among other plants as the stems tend to sprawl. Likes sun and alkaline soil, and is very drought-tolerant. Forms a tight clump. 60cm.

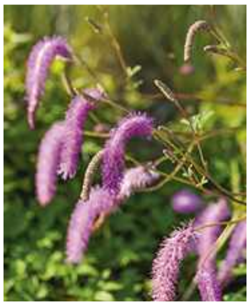
MIX N



***Astrantia* ‘Hadspen Blood’**
Has beautiful red flower heads borne on and off all summer on upright but flexible stems. Likes sun or light shade, but dislikes heat and drought. Moderately spreading clumps. 70cm.



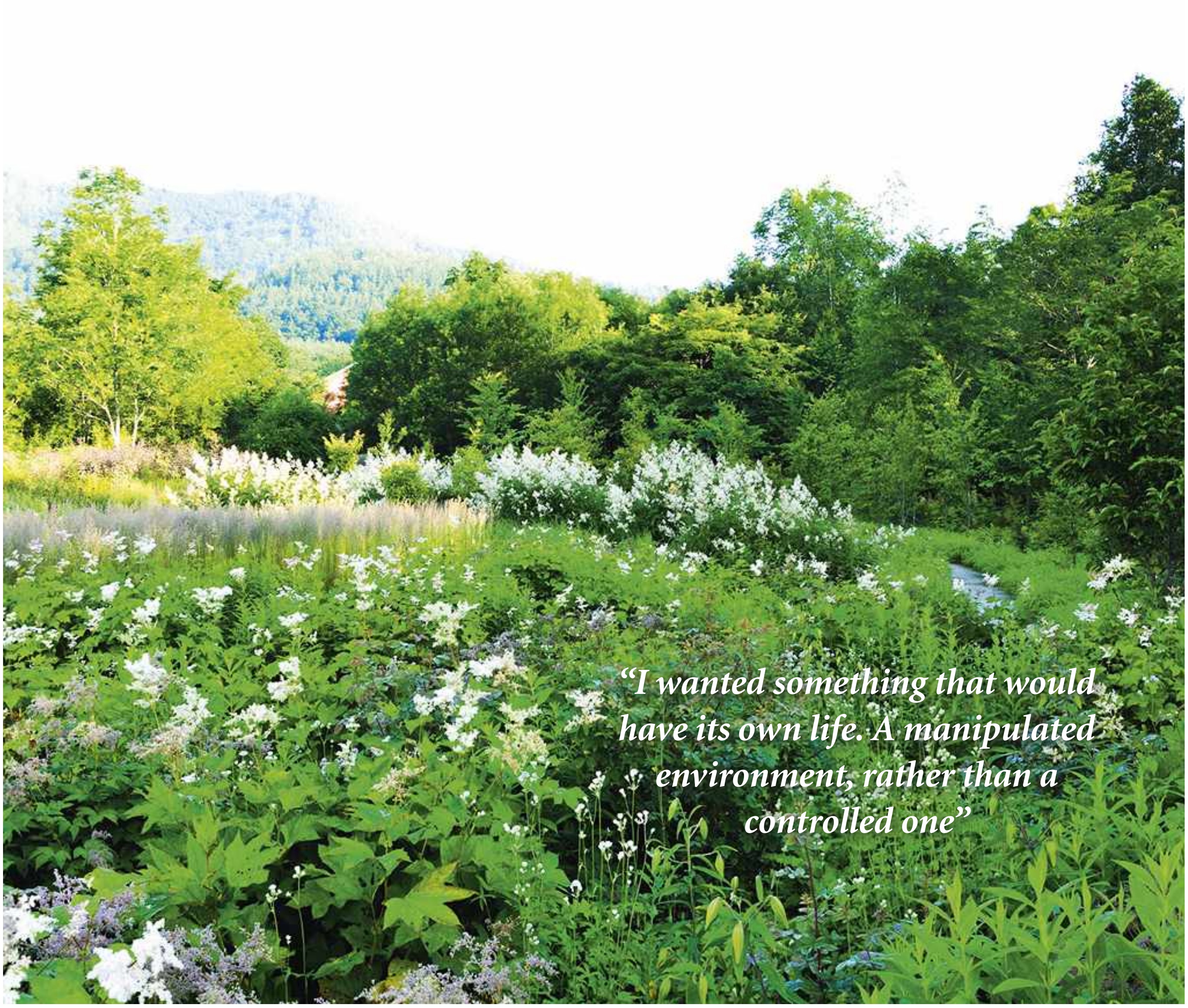
Valeriana officinalis
Produces clusters of lovely, small white flowers on tall stems in early to mid summer. Has rather limited foliage. Prefers sun and moisture. Forms clumps that break up with time. 1.6m.



Sanguisorba hakusanensis
A Japanese native that produces high-quality, divided foliage from spring onwards and then vivid, pink, catkin-like flowers in late summer. Forms a moderately spreading clump. 1.5m.

Planting area 3

This area near the eastern edge of the Meadow Garden, which is sheltered by a row of oaks, uses several mixes in lush greens and cool creams that echo the foliage of the trees and shrubs, and by including several native species, gives visitors a glimpse of the rich, natural flora beyond.

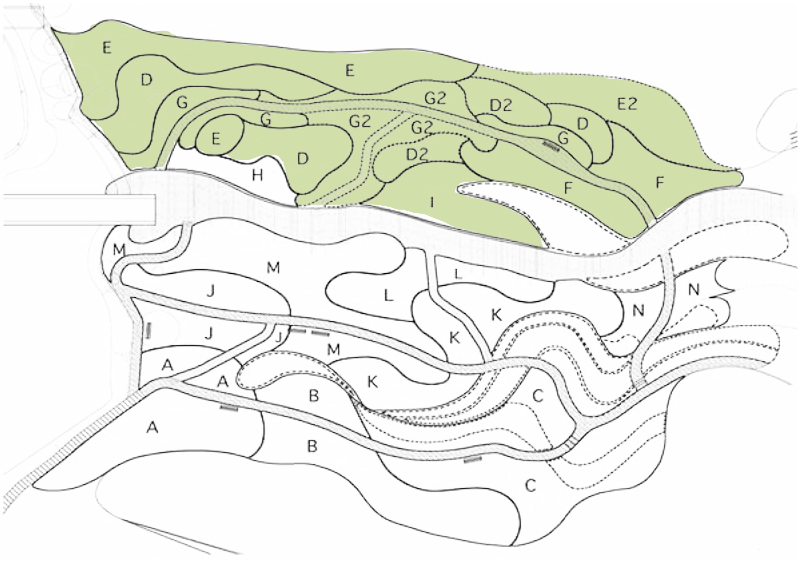


> *"I wanted something that would have its own life. A manipulated environment, rather than a controlled one"*

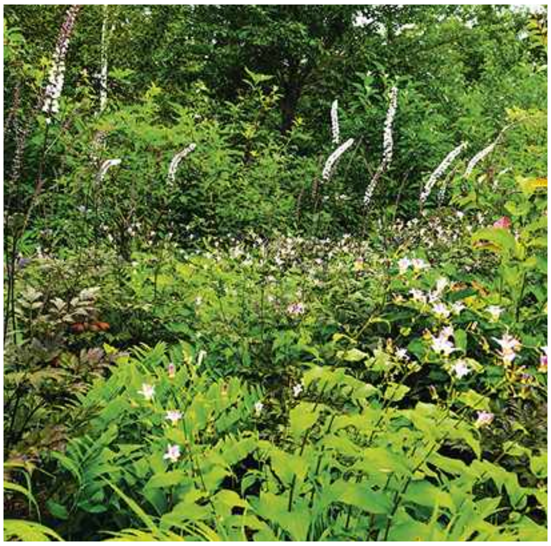
▷ example, would make up a low-percentage; space fillers would need to make up a higher one. Once established, the plants would begin to compete, just as they do in nature, much more so than plants in conventional block planting.

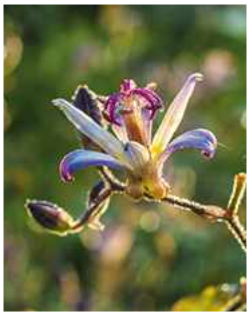
"I wanted something that would have its own life," says Dan. "A manipulated environment, rather than a controlled one. There was an element of risk I wanted to take." That risk is moderated by head gardener Midori Shintani, who had worked in public gardens in Sweden for several years before returning to her native Japan. "Midori has been absolutely crucial," says Dan. "She uses the plans as a template and then makes adjustments." It is Midori who makes the decisions on whether to replace failures, or to weed out over-enthusiastic growth, although Dan gives guidance and makes further suggestions on his annual visits.

Tokachi's Meadow Garden is a unique and very successful experiment in large-scale planting design; it is important too, as it ▷

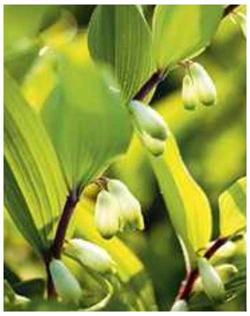


MIX D

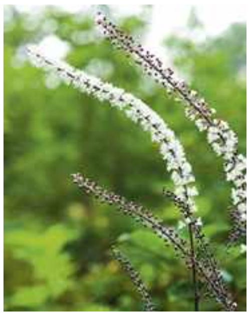




***Tricyrtis* 'Tojen'**
Exquisite flowers in late summer and autumn sit above elegant, pendant foliage. Prefers moist shade but well-drained soils are essential. Will slowly form clumps. 1m.

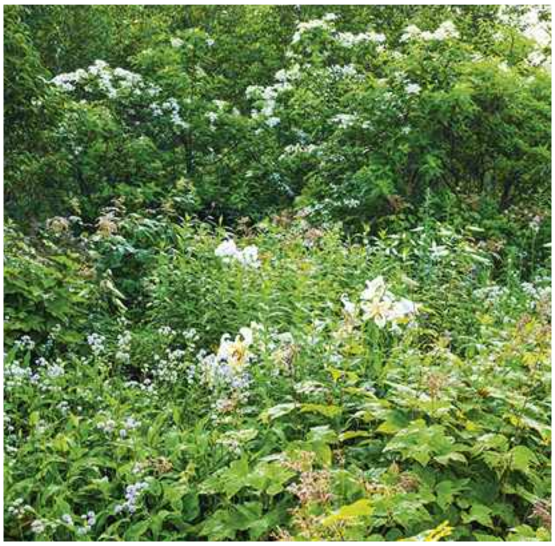


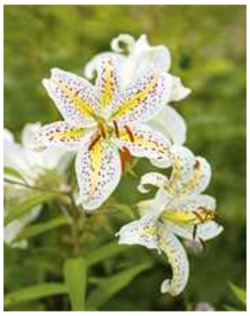
Polygonatum odoratum
Pendant bells on arching stems with unusual and neat foliage. Likes shade and reasonably moist, but well-drained, soil. Can be summer dormant and slowly forms large clumps. 80cm.



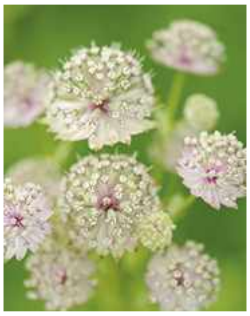
***Actaea simplex* (Atropurpurea Group) 'Black Negligee'**
Produces dark foliage and fragrant flowers in early autumn. Often grown in light shade, but a moist,well-drained soil is essential. 2m.

MIX F

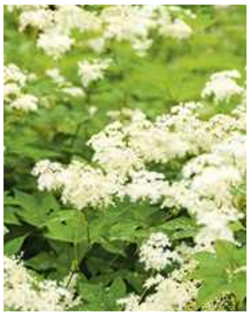




Lilium auratum
Its very large and heavily scented white flowers sit atop narrow stems in midsummer. Needs to be grown in groups for full effect. Sun and fertile, well-drained soil is essential. Not clump-forming. 1.5m.

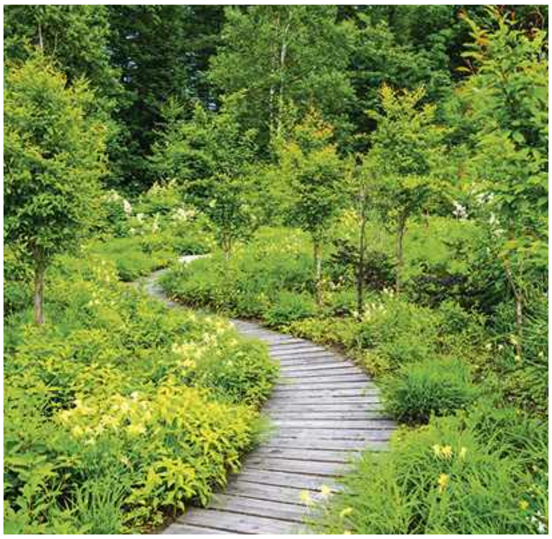


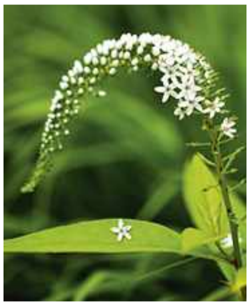
Astrantia major* subsp. *involucrata
Off-white flower heads appear all summer on upright stems. Combines well with many other plants. Likes sun or light shade, but dislikes heat and drought. 70cm.



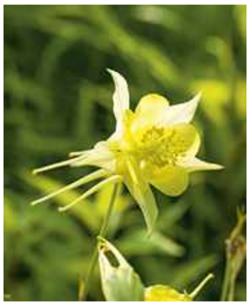
Filipendula camtschatica
A magnificent, giant version of meadowsweet that flowers in midsummer. Ideal for grand settings or country gardens. Likes sun or light shade in moist soil and is moderately spreading. 2m.

MIX G

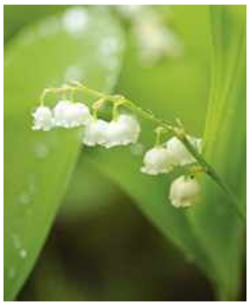




Lysimachia clethroides
Produces elegant flower spikes in midsummer, and its neat foliage on upright stems, can colour well in autumn. Likes most soils in sun or light shade, spreading – sometimes strongly. 80cm. AGM.



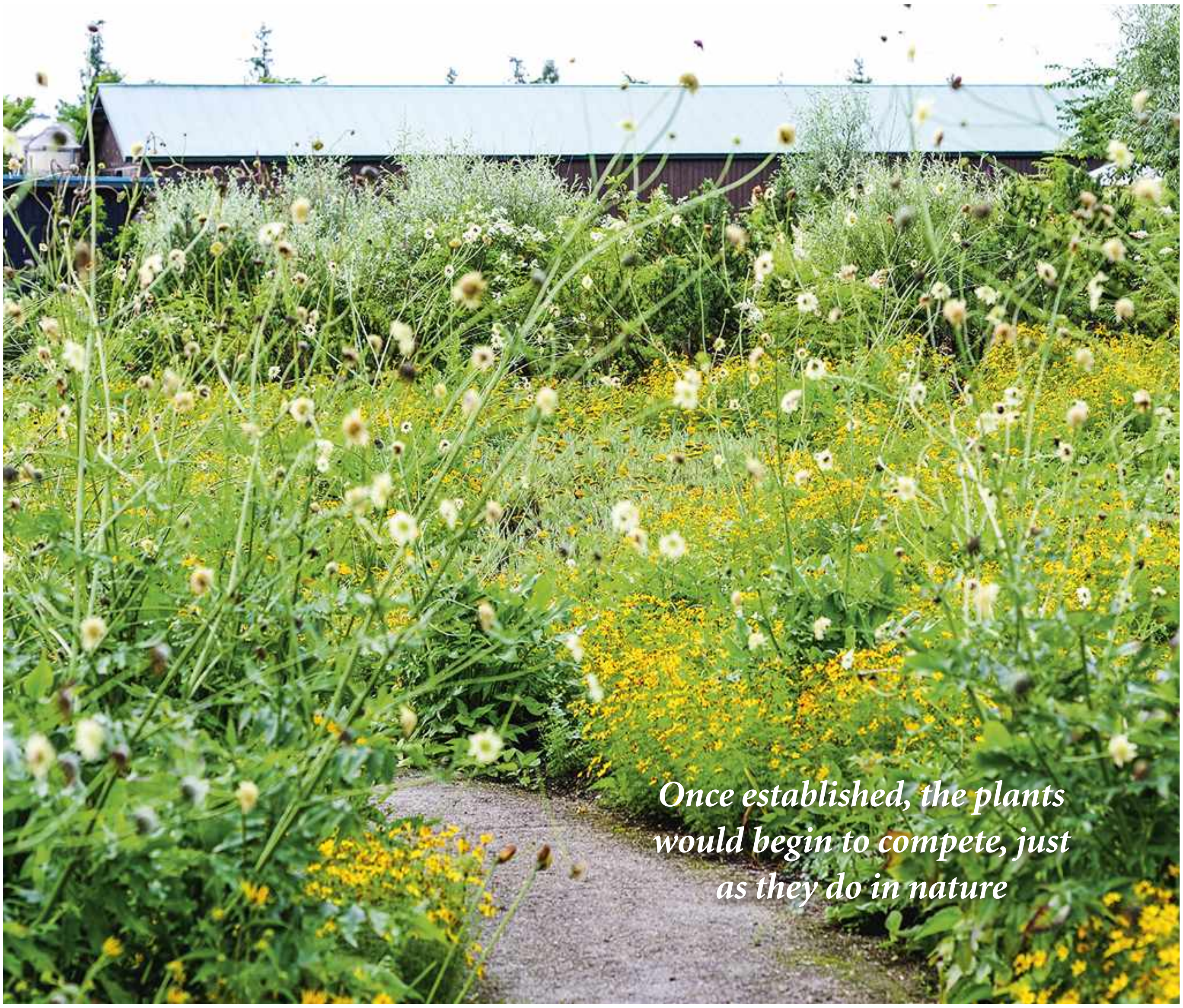
***Aquilegia* 'Yellow Star' (Star Series)**
Flowers early summer with delicate, divided foliage. Likes sun or light shade in most soils. Forms non-spreading, tight clump. Short-lived, but seeds easily. 80cm. AGM.



Convallaria keiskei
This lily of the valley is famous for its sweetly scented flowers that form in late spring. Establishes only slowly, but eventually forms large clumps in humus-rich soil and shade. 15cm.

Planting area 4

The two mixes in this area include mostly yellow flowers, with a long band of *Achillea* 'Coronation Gold' echoed by the pale straw tone of *Cephalaria gigantea*, whose flower heads dance high above the other species, adding effervescence and movement.



Once established, the plants would begin to compete, just as they do in nature

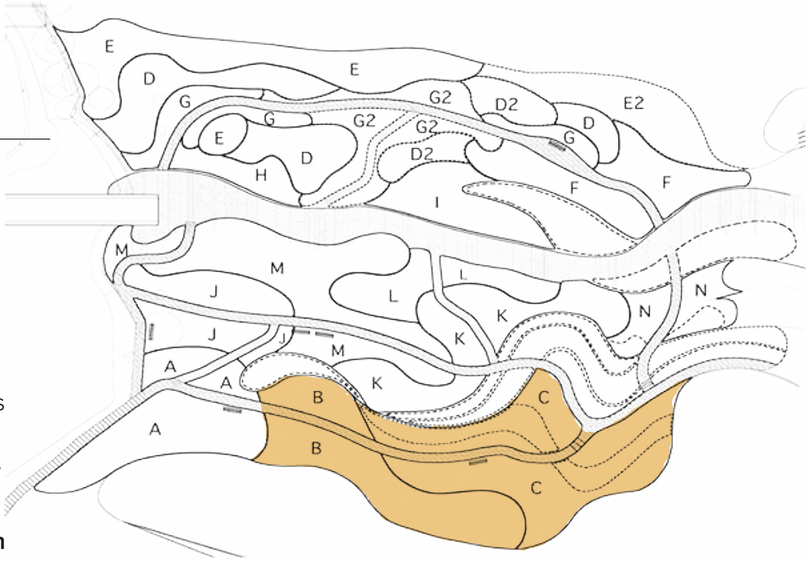
▷ is helping develop a new way of creating the kind of plantings that will work in big public spaces. Let's hope for more examples of such inspirational work closer to home. ◻

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Tokachi Millennium Forest, Minami 10-sen,
Haobi, Shimizu, Hokkaido 089-0356, Japan.
Tel +81 156 633000. **Website** tmf.jp/language/english

READER EVENT

Don't miss the chance to hear designer Dan Pearson discussing his collaboration with head gardener Troy Scott Smith at Sissinghurst at the GARDENS ILLUSTRATED Festival in April. Writer Noël Kingsbury will also be talking about his experiences of visiting gardens across five continents. For details see page 10 or visit **gardensfestival.com**



MIX B

Alchemilla mollis
Produces a froth of yellow in early summer and scallop-shaped leaves. Likes sun or light shade in any soil. Forms moderately spreading clumps and can seed strongly. 30cm. AGM.

***Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm'**
Bold, daisy flowers form in late summer and usually enjoy a long season. Likes any reasonable soil in sun. Forms moderately spreading clumps. 70cm. AGM.

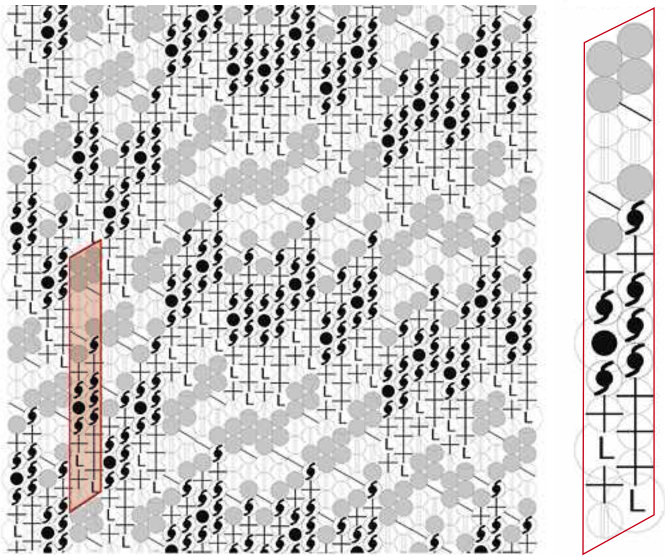
Sanguisorba albiflora
Divided foliage creates a strong feature from spring onwards. Flowers on upright stems in late summer. Sun, and preferably moist soil, forming relatively tight clumps. 1m.

MIX C

***Coreopsis verticillata* 'Zagreb'**
Yellow daisies over a long summer season, finely divided foliage. Sun, drought-tolerant once established, with moderately spreading clumps. 50cm. AGM.

Cephalaria gigantea
Produces very pale, scabious flowers in midsummer on tall, rangy stems above rosettes of foliage. Likes sun and any reasonable soil. Can be short lived, but it self seeds, and is non-spreading. 2m.

Hemerocallis dumortieri* var. *esculenta
Sweetly scented trumpets appear in early summer. Forms a tight, slowly spreading, clump of linear leaves. Prefers sun and moist soils. 60cm.



Dan's planting plans

For each mix Dan worked out a modular system in which the combination within the mix is never repeated the same way twice. He used a random-number-generating program to lay the module out over a large area. "The idea," he says, "is that the mixes develop their own balance and rhythms." In the detail of one of the sections, shown left, you can see the pattern of the highlighted strip is repeated in a slightly different configuration each time, creating a cohesive design that builds up naturally, rather than as a result of conscious design.

◍ *Alchemilla mollis* (used as space filler) AGM.

○ *Hemerocallis* 'Hyperion' (treat).

● *Levisticum officinale* (emergent).

L *Ligularia* 'The Rocket' (emergent) AGM.

+ *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm' (space filler) AGM.

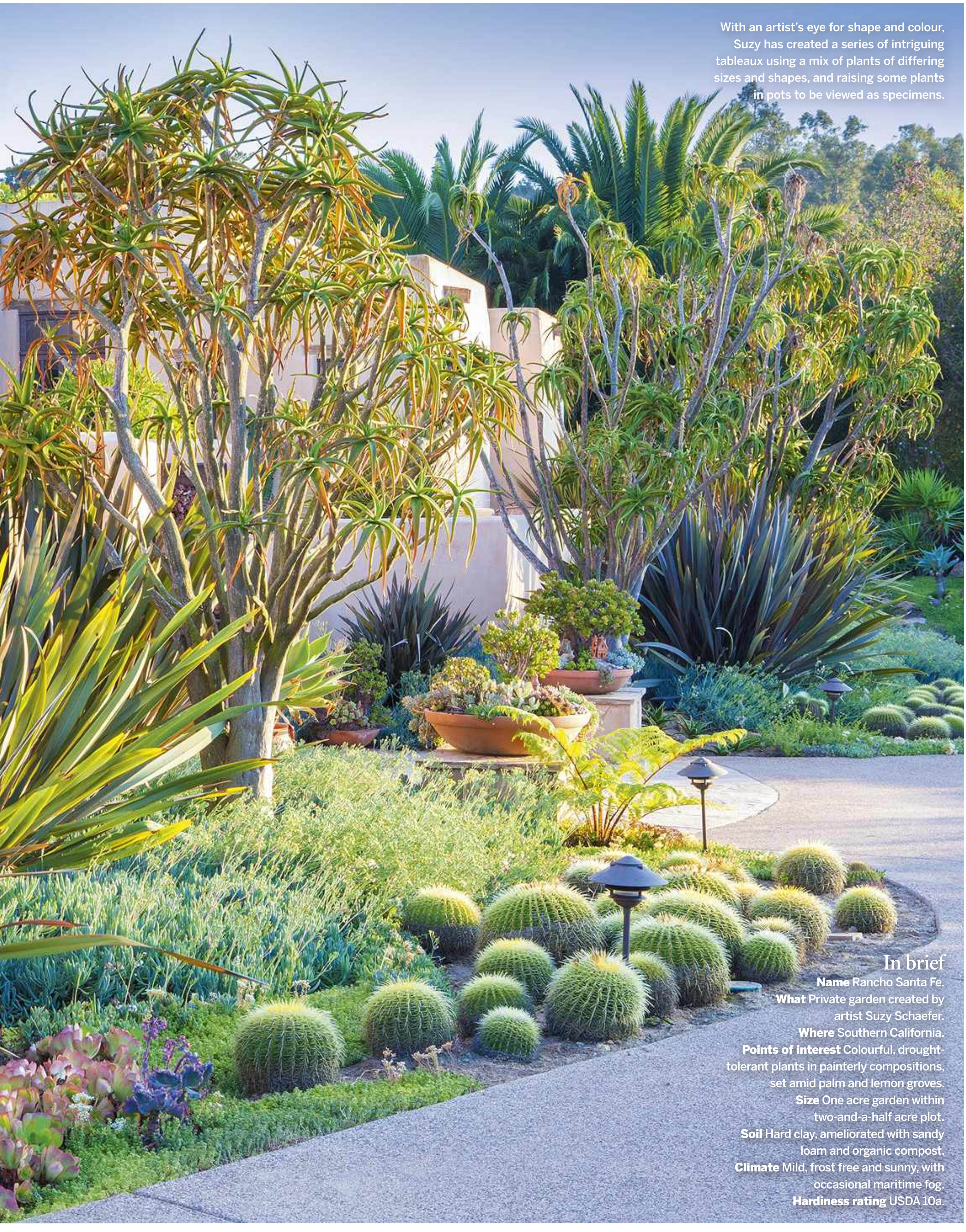
§ *Sanguisorbia albiflora* (space filler).

╲ *Thermopsis lupinoides* (emergent).

Some like it hot

Despite the arid conditions in her Californian garden, artist Suzy Schaefer has combined bold and colourful succulents with heat-loving, structural plants to create a spectacular space that may be dry but is far from dull and dusty

WORDS **SUSAN HEEGER** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**



With an artist's eye for shape and colour, Suzy has created a series of intriguing tableaux using a mix of plants of differing sizes and shapes, and raising some plants in pots to be viewed as specimens.

In brief

Name Rancho Santa Fe.

What Private garden created by artist Suzy Schaefer.

Where Southern California.

Points of interest Colourful, drought-tolerant plants in painterly compositions, set amid palm and lemon groves.

Size One acre garden within two-and-a-half acre plot.

Soil Hard clay, ameliorated with sandy loam and organic compost.

Climate Mild, frost free and sunny, with occasional maritime fog.

Hardiness rating USDA 10a.

Not only do succulents live on minimal water but their juicy leaves can defend houses against fire

The term dry garden often conjures up images of deprivation, but that's not the case with the landscapes Suzy Schaefer has swirled around her southern Californian house. On roughly half of her two-and-a-half acre plot she uses succulents – desert plants that store water as camels do – to craft scenes reminiscent of coral reefs and colour-mad abstract paintings. Stone paths meander through these, and rough boulders play up the plants' waxy sheen and often flower-like shapes. At key points, the walks widen into patios from which views open to palm trees and lemon groves, with the gardens as foreground to these layered compositions.

Not surprisingly, Suzy is a painter by profession and was first drawn to succulents for their visual impact. "They offer so many tones and graphic shapes," she says, "and many bloom, adding yet more dimensions to a landscape." Although Suzy has gardened all her life, her previous gardens were more traditional, featuring succulents as accents, mostly in pots. Only here, around the house she and her husband Rob built in 1999, did they become the main event.

Located inland from San Diego, their semi-rural enclave, Rancho Santa Fe, was once awash with citrus orchards. But recently, drought has whittled the region's 38cm of annual rain down to 12cm, and succulents make sense. Not only do they live on minimal water but their juicy leaves can defend houses against fire. The Schaefers learned this in 2007, when wild fire engulfed neighbouring homes but stopped at theirs.

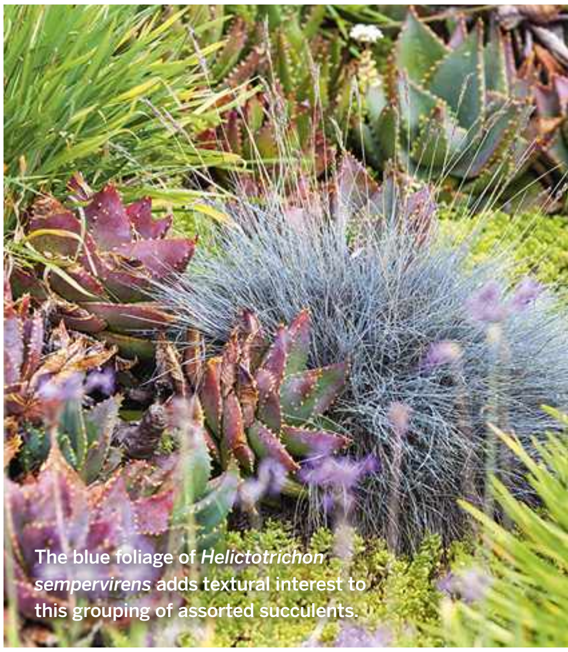
Initially, the couple bought the land for its rolling topography and frost-free microclimate, which succulents need to thrive. The house and landscape were designed together, with walled gardens off certain rooms and outdoor scenes crafted around views from inside. In collaboration with landscape architect Robert Dean, Suzy conceived the garden's organising features, including the flagstone path around the house and the undulating borders that showcase plant colours and textures in changing ways along the route.

She and Robert began with the larger elements, relocating and grouping existing Canary Island palms to create a grove below the house and planting specimen agaves, aloes and euphorbias in the beds. These anchor sweeps of smaller, ground-covering aeoniums, sedums and crassulas. "Masses of plants, of course, have a greater impact than ones and twos in a deep border," says Suzy. "These, with their range of greens, are like an artist's palette, so much fun to play with." Playing, for her, meant tossing purple *Aeonium* 'Zwartkop' against bright-green *Crassula ovata*, and golden *Echinocactus grusonii* against the cool-green fingers of *Senecio mandraliscae*.

Suzy visited several estate gardens, including the Huntington Library in San Marino and Lotusland near Santa Barbara, where she learned the potential "grown-up size" of her choices, as opposed to the "little nut cup" versions she found in nurseries. At planting time, this helped with placement and spacing. For information on care requirements, she consulted experts, including Jeff Moore, owner of Solana Succulents, where she bought much of her ▷

Commonly known as golden barrels, these *Echinocactus grusonii* seem almost to glow.

Suzy mixes *Crassula* and *Graptopetalum* rossettes to create pretty displays.


The blue foliage of *Helictotrichon sempervirens* adds textural interest to this grouping of assorted succulents.

The flower-like forms of low-growing aeoniums and graptopetalums form a dense patchwork of ground cover alongside the path that circumnavigates the house.

Ornaments, such as this peacock with rusted metal 'feathers', accent plantings of silvers and green.

Strong sculptural plants, including *Aloe barberae*, *Phormium tenax* and *Agave attenuata* work well with the simple style of Suzy's house.

Cotyledons with variegated *Furcraea foetida* 'Mediopicta' and purple *Aeonium* 'Zwartkop' create a collage of colour near the house.

▷ material. "I've learned by doing," she says. "And by asking questions."

To give her plants a good start, she added truckloads of sandy loam to her hard, clay soil and amended with organic compost. She mounded beds to enhance drainage and display plants at different elevations, helping distinguish each amid her layered arrays. Boulders serve as accents and trap water between them, creating ideal planting pockets. More plants are tucked in around the shallow pots that Suzy sets in the beds. These offer concentrated versions of larger scenes. In one, a rosy *Crassula ovata* 'Minima' draws the eye to the red blooms of *Crassula perfoliata* var. *falcata* amid the silver paddles of *Cotyledon orbiculata*. In another, branching *Portulacaria afra* rises tree-like among flower-shaped *Graptopetalum paraguayense* and the beads of *Sedum rubrotinctum*. Suzy's fascination with succulent variations prompts her to try them in different ways. Most stay smaller in pots, which enables her to squeeze in some, such as *Euphorbia tirucalli*, that would otherwise outgrow a bed. Then too, plants such as aloes may redden in full sun and go greener with shade. Or, like many echeverias, they might grow better sheltered by taller plants than in open positions.

Suzy keeps the garden in shape with daily weeding and help from a gardener who comes in once a fortnight, as well as weekly help cleaning up. She's careful not to over water, which can rot succulents. Whatever the season, there's always something in bloom, from winter aloes to summer crassulas and dasylirions. She's quick to point out, however, that her plants don't need to bloom to be loved: "They don't all have to be peacocks," she says. □

Gardening in a dry climate

- Loosen and amend soil with organic material to promote good drainage and root growth.
- Mound soil in beds for fast drainage, and plant thirstier plants at the mound's base to catch runoff.
- Put in ground-cover plants to shade and cool the soil and reduce weeds.
- Until these ground-cover plants fill in, mulch beds to reduce any surface evaporation and to control soil temperatures.
- Arrange taller, sun-tolerant plants to shelter those that require more shade.
- Water sparingly, more often when plants are young, but only when soil is dry 2.5cm down.
- Direct water toward the base of plants, and avoid watering in sun, which can burn foliage.
- Grow plants with higher water needs in containers, where moisture levels are easier to control.
- Be vigilant about weeds, which compete with plants for water and soil nutrients.
- Add cool notes to a dry garden with the sound of water from recirculating fountains.

8 key plants from Suzy Schaefer's garden

1 *Aeonium urbicum*
Drought-tolerant, saucer plant from the Canary Islands, with pyramid-shaped, pink or white inflorescences that bees love. 1-2m. USDA 9b-11[†].

2 *Tulbaghia violacea*
More commonly known as society garlic, this pretty, herbaceous perennial has garlic-scented leaves and dainty, pink flowers that smell like hyacinth. 50cm. AGM[*]. RHS H2, USDA 7a-10b.

3 *Crassula ovata* 'Minima'
A South African jade plant, which grows tall in part-shade or full sun. In winter it produces small, white blooms. 3m. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.

4 *Aloe* 'Rooikappie'
Another South African succulent, this small *Aloe* has green-spotted leaves and branching blooms that begin orange and open yellow. Its Afrikaans name translates as red riding hood. 30-60cm. USDA 9b-11.

5 *Agave attenuata* 'Nova'
This silver-blue Mexican native likes sun or shade but dies after its (infrequent) flowering, leaving off-shoots behind. 1m.

6 *Echinocactus grusonii*
A sun-loving, Mexican desert native that can grow to a metre tall. Known as the golden barrel, this luminous plant features sharp spines and yellow summer flowers. 60-90cm. AGM. USDA 9a-11.

7 *Alluaudia procera*
Hailing from Madagascar, this unusual succulent with round leaves and grey spines requires bright light but needs very little water. 7m. USDA 9b-11.

8 *Anigozanthos pulcherrimus*
This Australian perennial is commonly known as golden kangaroo paws. It produces clusters of yellow, furry blooms on red stems above strap-like leaves. Works well with succulents. 2m.

[*] Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

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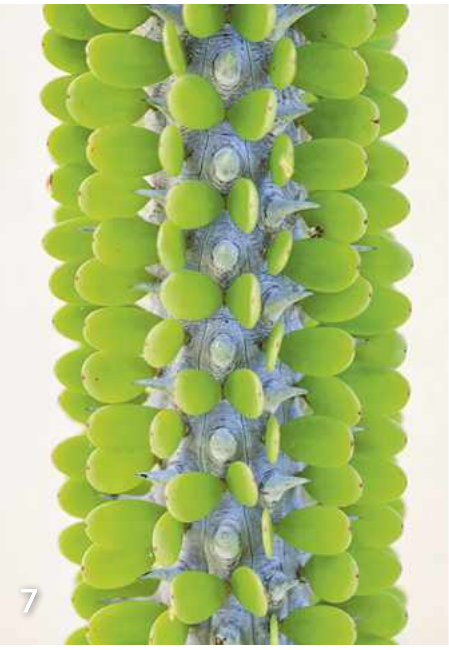
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8

Top row, from left Margery Fish championed simple, informal gardens that amateur gardeners could manage themselves; Vita Sackville-West's writings (and her energetic love life) added greatly to the glamour of Sissinghurst, which remains an iconic taste-maker to this day; Rosemary Alexander has excelled as garden-maker, designer, teacher and writer.

Middle row, from left A deep interest in garden history informed Rosemary Verey's essentially nostalgic style, enriched by complex, luxuriant planting; Arabella Lennox-Boyd heads an international practice that has been making gardens round the world for 40 years; Gertrude Jekyll remains the most influential gardener of the past 150 years.

Bottom row, from left Described as the 'grande dame' of British gardening, Penelope Hobhouse had to learn from Americans how to conquer her natural shyness; Jinny Blom builds castles, moves roads and draws up business plans as well as thinking about the pretty flowers; Sarah Price gets fed up of being labelled as the pin-up girl of modern garden design, and wants more women to recognise their own talent.

TOP ROW, L-R: LINDLEY LIBRARY / RHS IMAGES; SASHA / GETTY IMAGES; LAURIER CALLAWAY. MIDDLE ROW L-R: HOWARD SOOLEY; MARTIN POPE; LINDLEY LIBRARY / RHS IMAGES. BOTTOM ROW L-R: CRISTIAN BARNETT; CHARLIE HOPKINSON; ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Women in garden design

Dislike of the laddish culture of the building site? Lack of self belief? Reluctance to blow their own trumpets? A self-imposed glass ceiling? Why are only a handful of the world's top garden designers women?

WORDS AMBRA EDWARDS

Nothing annoys Jinny Blom more than when some journalist, usually male, writes up one of her projects, assuming that the master plan, groundworks and hard landscaping she has laboured over have been the work of one of her collaborators, usually an architect, invariably a man. "It happens over and over again," she says wearily. "Because I'm a woman there's this assumption that all I do is drop in the pretty flowers, that I couldn't possibly do a built environment."

The shelves of her London office groan with stacks of grey books, showing master plans for estates of many thousands of acres, public housing projects, as well as private and show gardens. "There's a cultural misogyny in garden criticism that drives me mad," she pronounces, quietly incandescent, "and it's skewing the record for all women."

In February 2014, the journal of the Society of Garden Designers – which has a membership that is more than 70 per cent female – asked why, when there are so many women designers, do so few make it to the top? It was suggested that women felt ill equipped to handle large scale construction projects, and were timorous in the face of diggers and drains.

Arabella Lennox-Boyd, top of the designer tree in anyone's book, roars with laughter. "In that case, I must work like a man," she says drily. "Every single project starts with the bones – earth, water, walls, paving, and yes, drainage – sometimes over 90, 100 or 300 acres. The stuff that happens beneath the ground is vital." Perhaps it's a generational thing, she concedes. "Look at Sarah Price, who is a true artist – but I can't imagine her being frightened by drains."

Sarah Price, appointed to London's Olympic Park at just 29, has earned her spurs on what was one of the world's biggest building sites. "Of course women are interested in how things are built, and it's integral to your job as a designer."

For Price, the building site was less intimidating than the boardroom. "I would be in meetings on the Olympic project where I was the only woman in the room with 30 men. At first I felt that I couldn't offer anything. But soon you realise that you can. If you're passionate about what you do, that engenders respect."

All agree that running a business is the least enjoyable part of their work, and even the redoubtable Penelope Hobhouse confesses to having to screw her ▷

> *"Where will you find a man dealing with family, finance, children, cooking, looking after a house on top of work? Women do it all the time – so why should running a landscape business be beyond them?"*
>
> ARABELLA LENNOX-BOYD

▷ courage to the sticking place to do battle with fractious clients over fees. But in terms of the discipline involved, several suggest that women, long accustomed to multi-tasking, may have the gender edge.

"Women are much more attentive to detail – they won't let something go if it isn't right – and they have terrific energy," maintains Lennox-Boyd. "Where will you find a man dealing with family, finance, children, cooking, looking after a house on top of work? How would they ever do that? Women do it all the time – so why should running a landscape business be beyond them?"

It's self belief that seems to be the killer. "I hate to say this," confides Sarah Price, "but from my experience of teaching, female students take fewer risks, and are less confident. Often they don't realise quite how good they are.

"In my own case, I so relish having creative opportunities, that it somehow overrides my fear. Perhaps it's more a male characteristic to say yes, I can work it out, I'm not sure how, but I'll do it. Women lack the bravado that men have, the gung-ho element." Charlotte Rowe agrees. "We're our own worst enemies – we're simply not prepared to stick our heads above the parapet." Last year, however, Rowe did just that, as one of only two female designers on Chelsea's Main Avenue. "It was very stressful," she concedes, "because in a way you're putting yourself up to be knocked down." But she'd do it all over again.

"I think women are definitely on the up – but they need to be bolder," says Rosemary Alexander, celebrated designer and founder of the English Gardening School. She would like to see them go after bigger, more high-profile jobs. "I think it's all a question, unfortunately, of self-promotion – they need to be much more upfront, to improve their websites, and become more versatile." Perhaps it's not so much about being a woman as being a British woman, suggests Penelope Hobhouse. Somehow, blowing your own trumpet is deemed unseemly. As her seminal books and garden-making at Tintinhull became known, she received repeated requests to design gardens in the USA. "My first response was, I can't do it. Designing for other people is very different from creating a garden for yourself. Probably a man would have jumped on the plane straight away." In her own case, it was spending time in America that gave her the necessary training in gungho-ness.

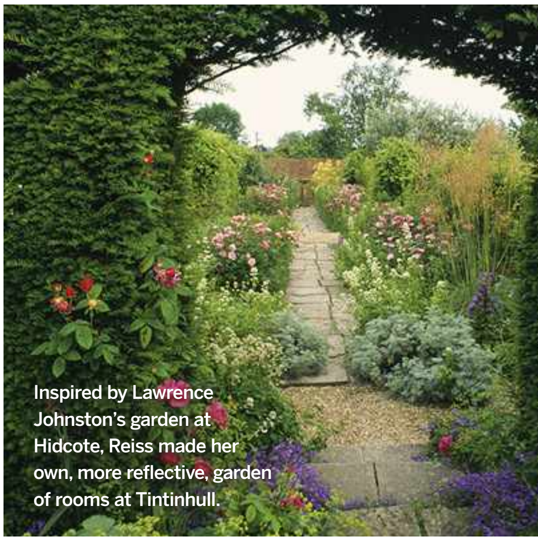
Both Penelope Hobhouse and Rosemary Alexander were late starters: Hobhouse began writing and Alexander trained as a landscape architect when their children went away to school. Charlotte Rowe retrained at 50, following a first career in PR. On the one hand, there's the need to gallop, to make up for lost time; on the other, they are spared the worst of the juggling between work and family. Sarah Price would sit up all night drawing, resolving problems on the Olympic site; that's harder now she has a baby keeping her up at nights. She'd like to scale back, to do smaller jobs, to have time to devote to her own garden. But perversely, the opportunities before her have never been more exciting, and her family has to eat.

Here's the rub. Every one of these women has succeeded because she couldn't afford to fail. When Rowe turned her back on PR, and Blom on psychotherapy, there was no going back. Nor was it an option for Penelope Hobhouse. In her heart of hearts, she would have preferred to write but, "I had made a resolution that, having left one husband, I was never going to depend on a man again, and ▷

Key women garden designers in history

From the middle of the 19th century, it is largely women who have shaped the way we think about gardens.

▶ GERTRUDE JEKYLL (1843-1932)
No designer has had more enduring influence on the British garden: for a century her painterly way of grouping plants in large, informal masses of colour; her insistence on harmony and rhythm; and her embrace of formal structure softened with loose, richly textured planting, has been the *sine qua non* of the successful British garden. Gardens were considered a series of carefully made pictures; and only really in the last decade has colour been supplanted as the guiding principle of design.



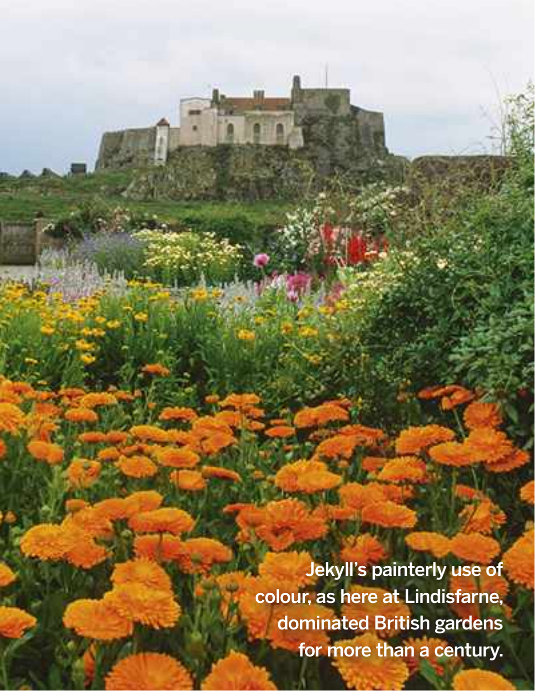
Inspired by Lawrence Johnston's garden at Hidcote, Reiss made her own, more reflective, garden of rooms at Tintinhull.

NORAH LINDSAY (1866-1948)
A major influence in the interwar years, Norah developed a rich, romantic, 'untidy' style that encouraged serendipity and self-seeding, wonderfully realised at her garden at Sutton Courtenay. In the 1920s, penniless but well connected, she began a glittering career as a High Society garden designer. Today she is best known for her long collaboration with Lawrence Johnston at Hidcote.

▲ PHYLLIS REISS (1886-1961)
When Phyllis Reiss moved to Tintinhull in 1933, she set about creating a garden of rooms within the Hamstone walls: tranquil enclosures unified by repeated plantings of silver, bronze and burgundy foliage and rhythmic topiary. Her unfussy elegance and year-round planting was to influence designers from Lanning Roper to Sylvia Crowe, and not least her successor at Tintinhull, Penelope Hobhouse.

▶ VITA SACKVILLE-WEST (1892-1962)
Vita would have insisted it was her husband, Harold Nicolson, who was the designer at now iconic Sissinghurst Castle – certainly in terms of its ground plan of rooms. But her exuberant, multi-layered planting style and her colour-themed gardens, especially her celebrated White Garden, have probably spawned more imitators in more countries than any designer, before or since.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ELIZABETH WHITING & ASSOCIATES / ALAMY; GAP PHOTOS / CAROLE DRAKE; MBP-ONE / ALAMY; JONATHAN BUCKLEY; THE NATIONAL TRUST PHOTOLIBRARY / ALAMY



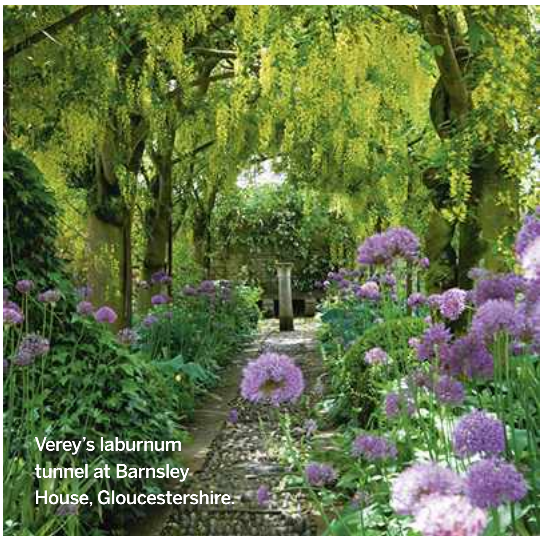
Jekyll's painterly use of colour, as here at Lindisfarne, dominated British gardens for more than a century.

▶ MARGERY FISH (1892-1969)
Our current fascination for perennials, and especially our continuing love-affair with the cottage garden, can be traced back to Margery Fish, whose approachable, funny and commonsensical books championed a more simple and informal planting style. She was an early fan of silver foliage, and introduced the concept of ground cover as a labour-saving device.

BRENDA COLVIN (1897-1981)
In 1947, Brenda published *Land and Landscape* – an influential work on landscape in the 20th century, reflecting her commitment to an ecological approach and to simple planting. While loving her own garden, Little Peacocks, Brenda famously rejected private garden design as too subject to the whims and fancies of owners, turning to more durable projects such as power stations, reservoirs and town planning.

The White Garden at Sissinghurst is perhaps its most iconic garden feature.

Margery Fish's garden at East Lambrook, packed with 'small unshowy plants' such as hardy geraniums, espoused an easy informality.



Verey's laburnum tunnel at Barnsley House, Gloucestershire.

SYLVIA CROWE (1901-1997)
Sylvia Crowe was the pre-eminent landscape architect in post-war Britain and the author of a host of standard texts on landscaping, design and forestry. Her *Garden Design* (1958) is cited by many designers as a seminal text. Sylvia worked on Harlow and Basildon new towns, created Rutland Water, merged hated power stations and commercial forestry into the landscape – but never entirely abandoned gardens.

▲ ROSEMARY VEREY (1918-2001)
Rosemary came to epitomise Country House style, at its zenith in the 1980s, which she marketed with particular success in USA – all yew hedges, knots, fulsome pastel borders, discreet classical statuary and immaculate maintenance. She had a gift for striking set pieces – her laburnum tunnel and above all her supremely photogenic potager, inspired by Villandry, were copied the world over.

Timeline Key dates in history

1573 During the 16th century, a woman's place is generally accepted as being in the garden; indeed a well-kept garden is the sign of an accomplished housewife, as in Thomas Tusser's *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*.

1700s From the early 1700s, practical gardening is increasingly accepted as a pastime for aristocratic women, and several are hailed as gardening pioneers, including Mary, Duchess of Beaufort, Henrietta, Lady Luxborough at Barrells and the Princess Augusta at Kew.

1798 In *Reflections on the Present Condition of the Female Sex*, Quaker philanthropist Priscilla Wakefield considers how, following the loss of a husband or father, women may earn a living. She suggests 'Ornamental gardening, and the laying out of pleasure grounds and parks, with the improvement of natural landscape… may… afford an eligible maintenance to some of those females, who in the days of their prosperity, displayed their taste in the embellishment of their own domains.' This is to prove a template for many subsequent designers.

1850 The prissy 19th century finds garden work too uncouth for ladies, until writer Jane Loudon argues that women can not only dig and prune as well as men, but may also turn successfully to design: 'there is not any lady who can design a pattern, and embroider a gown, that might not in a few hours be taught to design flower gardens with as much skill and taste as a professional landscape gardener.'

1878 Fanny Rollo Wilkinson persuades the men-only Crystal Palace School of Landscape Gardening and Practical Horticulture to admit her, and becomes the first female landscape gardener. Despite laying out over 75 public gardens in London, it takes years before she is actually paid for her work.

1891 Swanley Horticultural College becomes the first to accept women. In January 1896, two Swanley students, Annie Gulvin and Alice Hutchins, become the first women gardeners at Kew.

1897 The RHS inaugurates the Victoria Medal of Honour. Out of 60 recipients, just two are women – the celebrated plantswoman and garden maker Ellen Willmott and Gertrude Jekyll.

1898 Daisy, Countess Warwick, founds Studley College, the first of around 20 women-only gardening colleges to open between 1898 and 1940 (few receive RHS

• Timeline continues on page 81

> *"I realised just the other day that I've designed my own perfect job. It's bloody hard work, but I've only myself to blame."*
>
> JINNY BLOM

▷ must earn my own living. And I could earn so much more from designing." How different is this from the stereotype of the well-heeled Lady of a Certain Age who takes up garden design essentially as an amusement to fill the empty hours once the children have flown? Even the impeccably poised Rosemary Alexander gets a little hissy at this image. She set up the English Gardening School in 1983, and now teaches all over the world. She estimates 80 per cent of her students are women, and though the majority take it up as a second career, it is by no means, as Brita von Schoenaich has unkindly styled it, a 'menopausal' occupation. "Women of all ages sign up. Generally, it's something they've wanted to do for a long time, so they're very dedicated. And the vast majority of them go on to make a career of it. They may not hit the big time but they can earn a very decent living designing small and medium-sized domestic gardens."

For the women who do make it to the top, more stereotypes dog their heels. Sarah Price, young and sylph-like, is heartily sick of being called a 'garden fairy' and asked to wear pink in photoshoots. Blom and Lennox-Boyd, being women of decision and intelligence, are generally referred to as ball-breakers. Penelope Hobhouse has become English gardening's headmistress figure. Happily, all are blessed with a ready sense of humour.

All are made deeply uneasy by the dilettante image that devalues the profession they love. Garden design courses vary hugely in quality and scope: their overwhelming advice for a woman starting out today is to study landscape architecture – the course may be light on plant knowledge, but it is a serious qualification, which will give a woman the technical grounding she needs.

Yet, despite these frustrations, their outlook is optimistic. "We shouldn't worry too much about women at Chelsea," reflects Lennox-Boyd. "I think in the real world, women are busy. When I think about who has been most influential in garden and landscape design both in the past and now, it seems to me that there are many more women than men – Gertrude Jekyll, Vita Sackville-West, Nancy Lancaster… In landscape, Sylvia Crowe was hugely important at a time when there were no men whatsoever in the frame except perhaps Jellicoe and Russell Page, and her legacy has been far more profound. Today, think of the incredible contribution Lady Salisbury has made to classical gardens, think of Rosemary Verey, Penelope Hobhouse, Julie Toll and her wild flowers or Gina Price at Pettifers – not a professional designer but such a brilliant one. Then there's Jinny Blom, Kathryn Gustafson, Martha Schwartz… I know there are some very talented men designers, but I can't think of any who have influenced design more than these women."

The last word goes to Jinny Blom. "I realised just the other day that I've designed my own perfect job," she says, beaming. "It's bloody hard work, but I've only myself to blame." □

READER EVENT

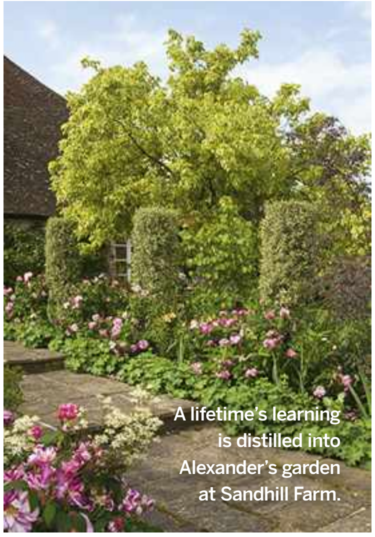
The annual GARDENS ILLUSTRATED Talk, held this year on Tuesday 19 May during Chelsea Flower Show Week, features Penelope Hobhouse, Jinny Blom and Sarah Price in conversation. They will discuss women in garden design past, present and future along with their own experience of working in garden design. For details of how to book tickets go to **gardensillustrated.com**

Key women garden designers today

"As a woman, the respect isn't automatic, you feel you have to prove your worth – but these are issues with society rather than the profession." Sarah Price

▼ ROSEMARY ALEXANDER

Mother of four, Rosemary Alexander was given six months to prove herself when she began work in the 1970s as the only female trainee in a London firm of landscape architects. But she confounded expectations by lasting the course, and went on to rise to prominence as a teacher, writer and designer. For 11 years she was tenant of the National Trust's Stoneacre in Kent, where she transformed the gardens. Since 2000 she has made a new garden in Hampshire.



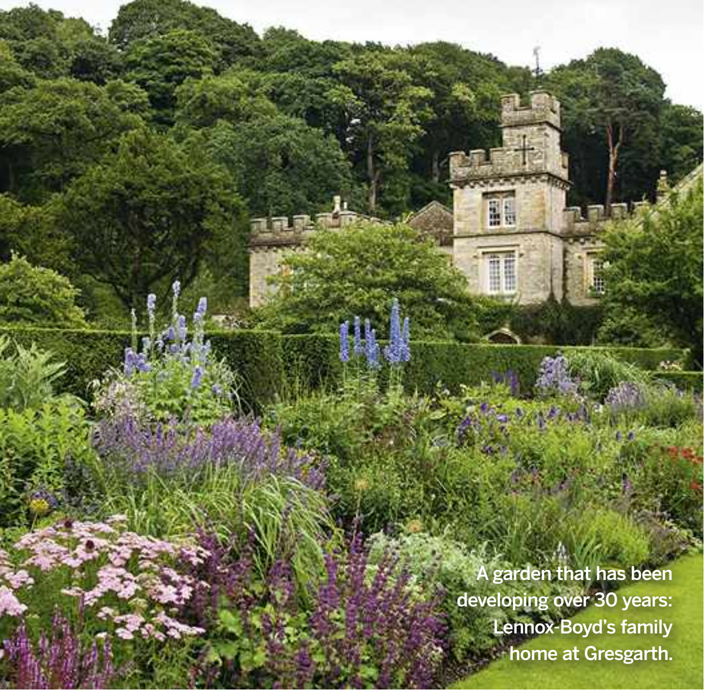
A lifetime's learning is distilled into Alexander's garden at Sandhill Farm.

▶ PENELOPE HOBHOUSE

At 38, Penelope Hobhouse was turned down by the landscape architecture course at Leeds, on the grounds that she was too old to make a meaningful career. Crestfallen, she went home and wrote a book – the first of many that were to provide inspiration to gardeners. In 1980 she took on the National Trust garden at Tintinhull in Somerset, which proved a stepping stone to a stellar international career in garden design.

Not just the only woman on the team, but the only person under 30 – the Olympic Park was a challenge for Sarah Price.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: GAP PHOTOS / MATTEO CARASSALE, DESIGN ARABELLA LENNOX-BOYD, UK; ANDREW LAWSON / MMGI, THE MANOR HOUSE, TEMPLE GUITING, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, DESIGN JINNY BLOM; MARIANNE MAJERUS, THE OLYMPIC PARK, LONDON 2012, SARAH PRICE, JAMES HITCHMOUGH; JASON INGRAM; GAP PHOTOS / JO WHITWORTH - OWNER/DESIGNER: ROSEMARY ALEXANDER



A garden that has been developing over 30 years: Lennox-Boyd's family home at Gresgarth.

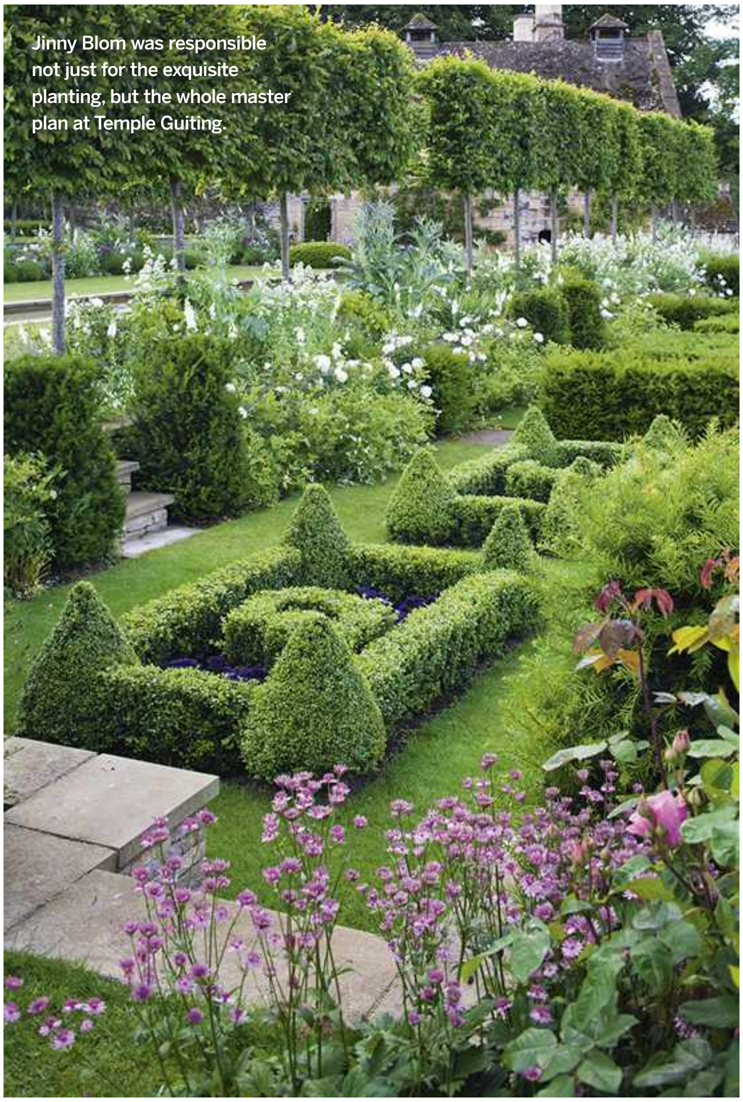
◀ LADY ARABELLA LENNOX-BOYD

Born in Rome, Arabella spent seven years studying landscape architecture in London. In an international career spanning four decades, she has won six Chelsea Golds and created over 450 gardens, from sleek city rooftops to landscape parks and Italian palace gardens. "I'm in love with plants," she declares. "And because I'm Italian, I'm in love with design, so I can only feel comfortable if the space is right."

▼ JINNY BLOM

Following a first career as a psychotherapist, and a stint with Dan Pearson, self-taught Jinny set up as a garden designer in 2000. Her best advice to women starting out? "Running a small business is hard work. Your family and friendships will suffer, your free time will evaporate and you will be, largely speaking, overstretched and underappreciated. But if you feel that's the life for you, then go ahead."

Penelope Hobhouse has relished creating a new garden in her eighties.



Jinny Blom was responsible not just for the exquisite planting, but the whole master plan at Temple Guiting.

◀ SARAH PRICE

After struggling to make a living as an artist, Sarah Price retrained as a garden designer. Working on the Olympic Park, youth was more an issue than gender. "As a young woman designer, I was treated with a great deal more respect on the Olympic project than on many less high-profile jobs. It almost seems, the less professional the environment, the more prejudice you have to overcome."

Timeline continued

recognition.) The most distinguished is Waterperry, founded in 1932 by Beatrix Havergal, reputedly the model for Miss Trunchbull in Roald Dahl's *Matilda*.

1908 Intrepid explorer Ella Christie, inspired by her travels in Japan, lays out an authentic Japanese garden at Cowden Castle. She employs a female garden designer – Taki Honda from Kyoto.

1911 Madeline Agar, another Swanley graduate, publishes *Garden Design in Theory and Practice* – the first work on the subject by a woman. By 1918 she is offering the first courses in garden design at Swanley. Her pupils include Brenda Colvin and Sylvia Crowe.

1921 Garden historian Eleanour Rohde is probably the first woman to design a show garden for Chelsea. Her herb garden receives a Silver-gilt medal.

1925 Kitty Lloyd-Jones (1898-1978) undertakes her first garden commission in Hertfordshire. She is perhaps the first woman to live, precariously, by designing gardens, rather than by writing or undertaking work in the public sphere.

1929 Brenda Colvin becomes a founder member of the new Institute of Landscape Architects. The following year, Lady Marjorie Allen becomes the first woman to be elected a fellow, becoming vice-president in 1939.

1937 Sylvia Crowe wins a Chelsea Gold for Cutbush Nurseries. Her design, which is not credited, is based on a bluebell wood, an astonishing precursor of today's naturalist styles.

1938 On 1 May, Vita Sackville-West opens Sissinghurst to the public for the first time. It is to become the most influential garden of the 20th century.

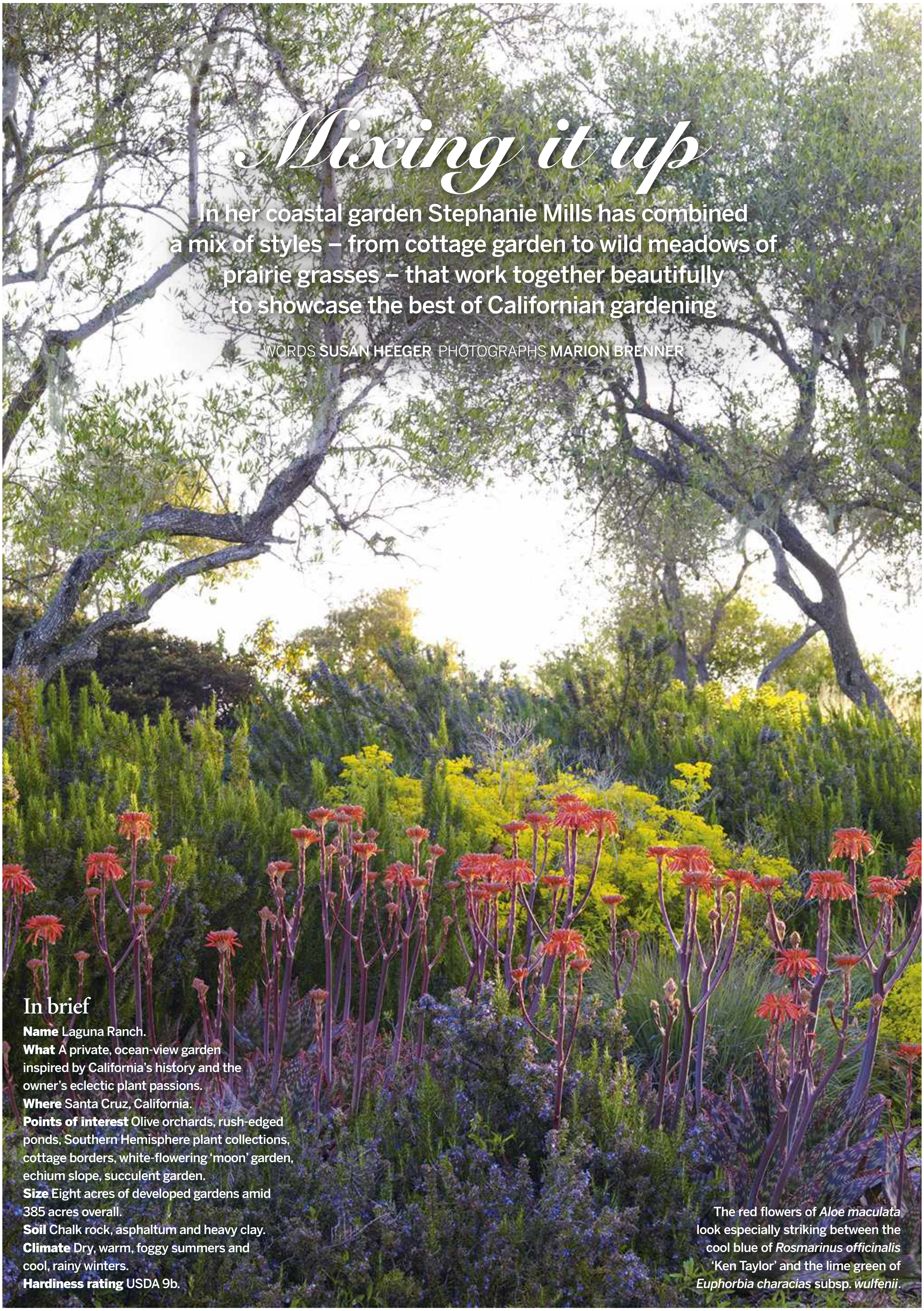
1943 Lady Eve Balfour (1899-1990) kickstarts the organic movement in Britain with her book *The Living Soil*, and founds the Soil Association three years later.

1967 Beth Chatto opens a small nursery. Her ecological approach to planting is to revolutionise 20th-century design.

1994 German-born Brita von Schoenaich introduces Britain to German naturalistic planting at a symposium at Kew. The New Perennials movement is born.

1998 Arabella Lennox-Boyd is awarded Best in Show at Chelsea, followed in 2007 by Sarah Eberle.

2012 Sarah Price receives international acclaim for her planting design for London's Olympic Park.



Mixing it up

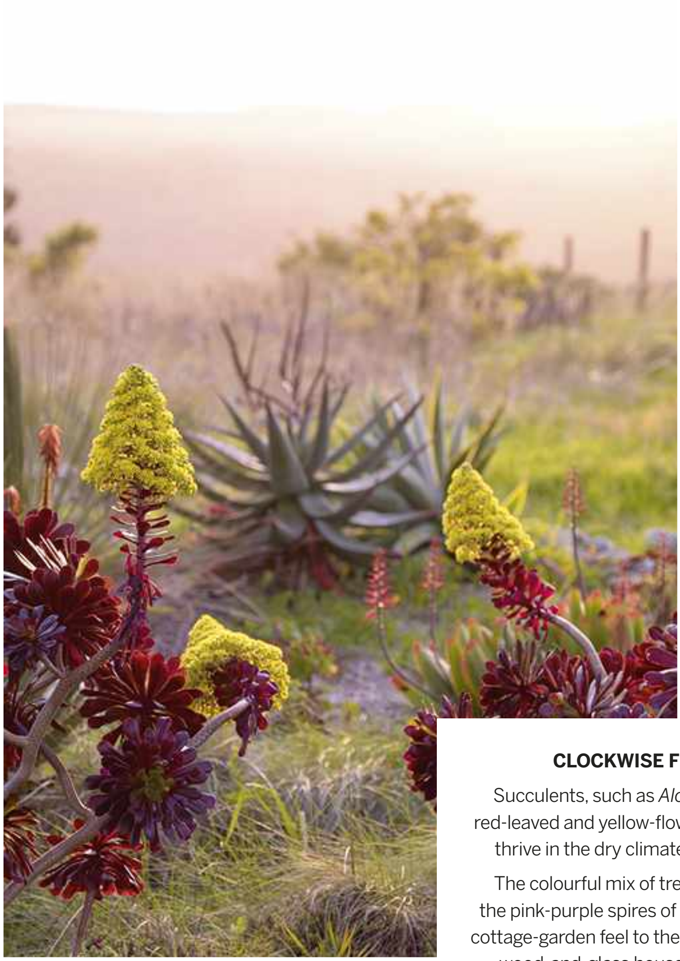
In her coastal garden Stephanie Mills has combined a mix of styles – from cottage garden to wild meadows of prairie grasses – that work together beautifully to showcase the best of Californian gardening

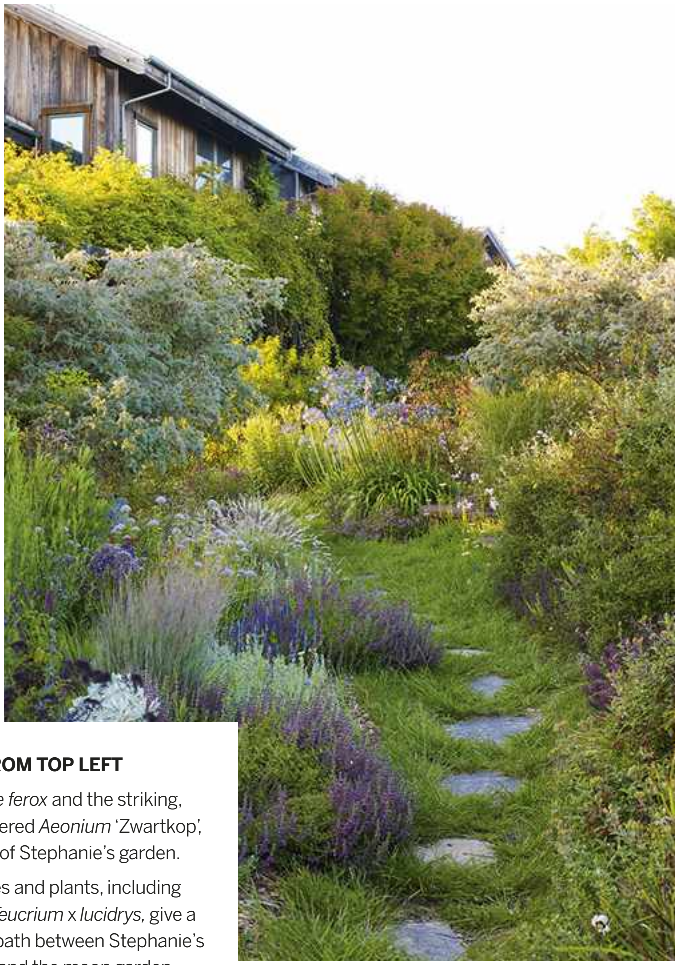
WORDS **SUSAN HEEGER** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARION BRENNER**

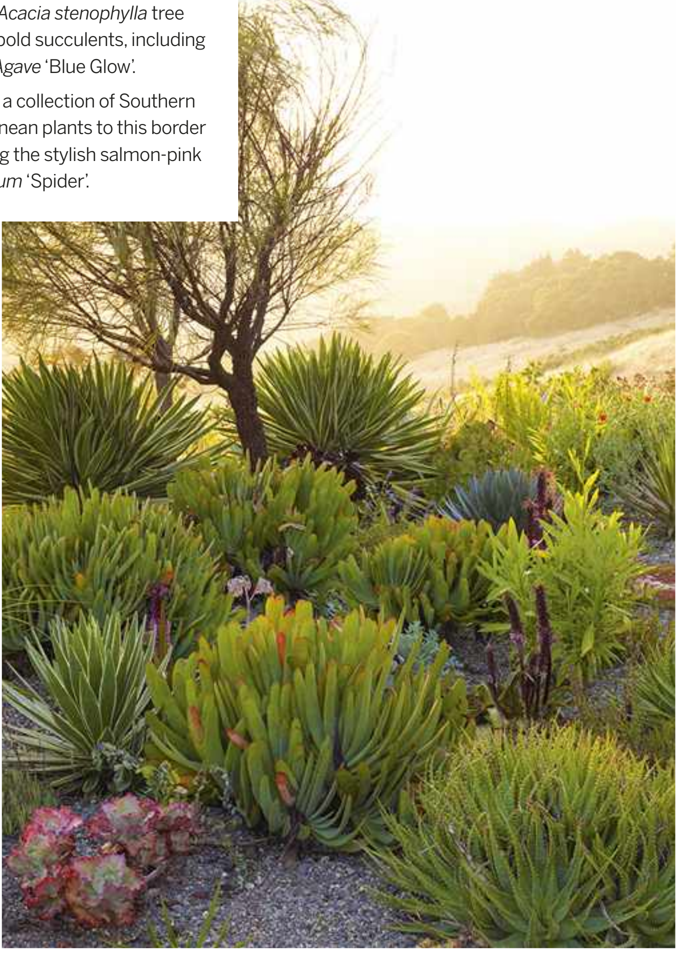
In brief

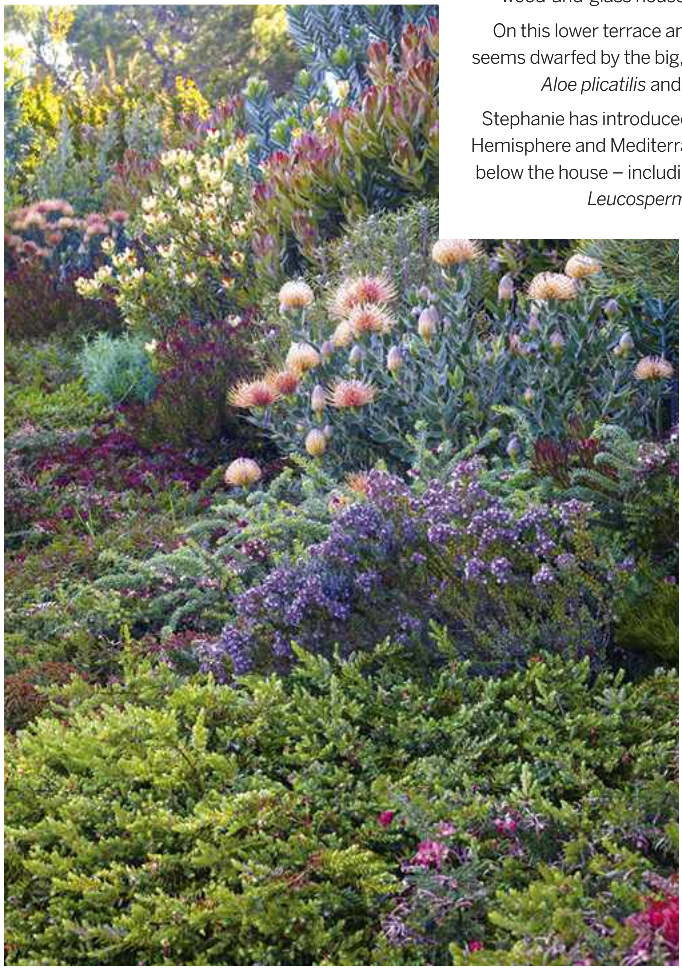
Name Laguna Ranch.
What A private, ocean-view garden inspired by California's history and the owner's eclectic plant passions.
Where Santa Cruz, California.
Points of interest Olive orchards, rush-edged ponds, Southern Hemisphere plant collections, cottage borders, white-flowering 'moon' garden, echium slope, succulent garden.
Size Eight acres of developed gardens amid 385 acres overall.
Soil Chalk rock, asphaltum and heavy clay.
Climate Dry, warm, foggy summers and cool, rainy winters.
Hardiness rating USDA 9b.

The red flowers of *Aloe maculata* look especially striking between the cool blue of *Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Ken Taylor' and the lime green of *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii*.









CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Succulents, such as *Aloe ferox* and the striking, red-leaved and yellow-flowered *Aeonium* 'Zwartkop', thrive in the dry climate of Stephanie's garden.

The colourful mix of trees and plants, including the pink-purple spires of *Teucrium* x *lucidrys*, give a cottage-garden feel to the path between Stephanie's wood-and-glass house and the moon garden.

On this lower terrace an *Acacia stenophylla* tree seems dwarfed by the big, bold succulents, including *Aloe plicatilis* and *Agave* 'Blue Glow'.

Stephanie has introduced a collection of Southern Hemisphere and Mediterranean plants to this border below the house – including the stylish salmon-pink *Leucospermum* 'Spider'.

Leptospermum turbinatum 'Flat Rock', a white shrub native to Australia thrives in this border alongside other Southern Hemisphere plants.

When Stephanie Mills steps out of her hilltop home in Santa Cruz, California, she sees much more than the cottage garden, planted to remind her of her English childhood, or the succulents that glow in the sun of her adopted climate. She sees history.

In parts of the garden she has created over 22 years, Stephanie has planted olive trees as a nod to Spanish settlers who followed the native Ohlone people, and who, in turn, were succeeded by dairy farmers, cattle ranchers and loggers. The entry gate opens on an olive orchard where churro sheep – once raised by the Navajo who made blankets from their wool – still graze. Stephanie has donkeys to protect the sheep from coyotes and mountain lions – another considered choice in harmony with the Spanish history. Graceful California oaks cast shade along the road as a natural stream meanders among wild flowers to ponds holding water for irrigation.

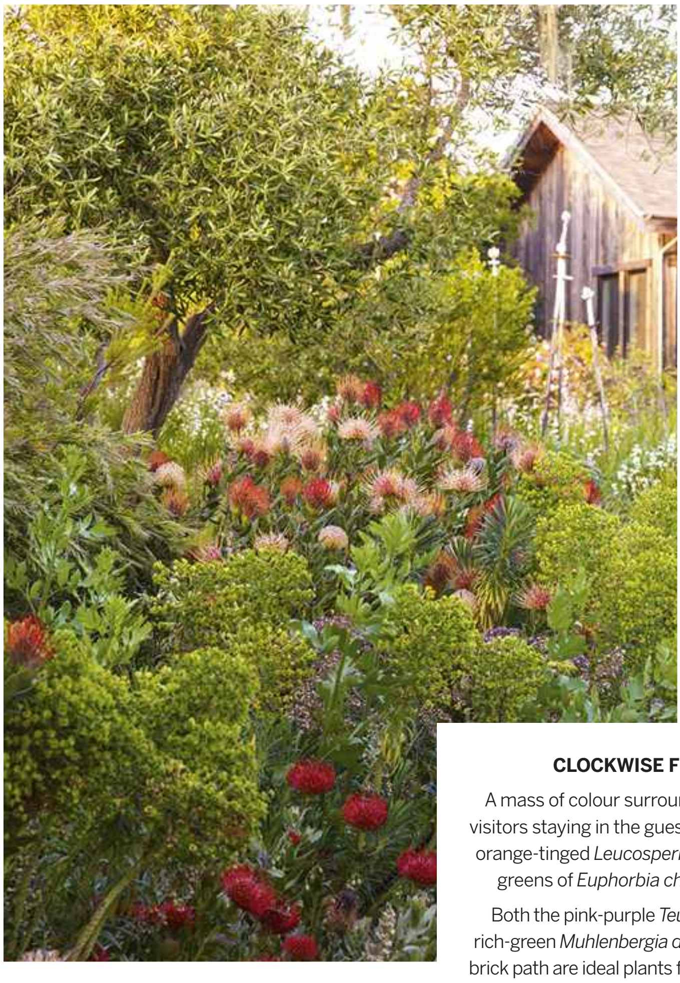
Stephanie cherishes the fact she is the temporary steward of this land she's named Laguna Ranch, preserving its past while making it hers. Her own plant tastes are indiscriminate; she has a soft spot for whatever survives the arid summers and rainy winters. "I plant what appeals to me," she says, "but if it dies more than twice, it's gone."

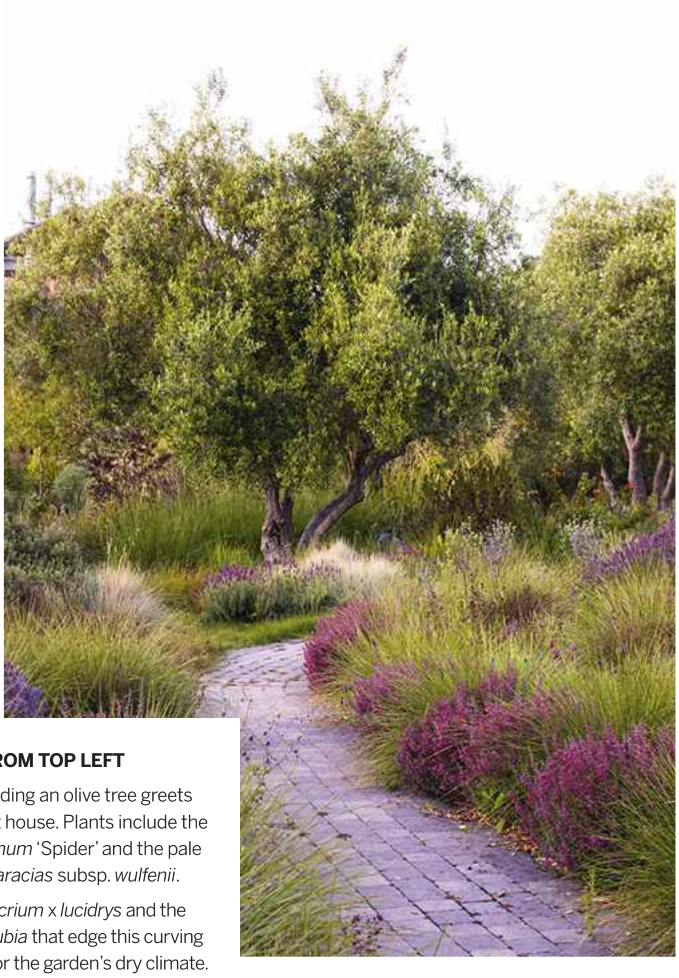
Her garden makes up only a small part of the property's 385 acres, which rise up from a wooded creek to the upper marine terrace where Stephanie lives with her husband David. Her garden's progress has been far from linear and never easy to explain. "It's hard to chart what happens in your head," she says. "I don't think in terms of long-term 'goals.' Images come to me fully formed and I set about bringing them to life."

After clearing the land of brambles and old cattle fodder, Stephanie dug ponds and installed fences to keep out wild boar. Her vision was of the buildings that make up the ranch – a rustic cabin, a barn and an airy wood-and-glass house overlooking the ocean – nestled amid wind-tossed, ornamental grasses. But 20 years ago these were rare in ▷

Journey of the senses

Stephanie has arranged the paths through her garden so that they add a sensory dimension to the walk. Behind the house, crunchy gravel adds sound and texture to an amble among grevilleas, leucadendrons, leptospermums and banksias, with aeoniums and kalanchoes sprouting through the stones. Then as this path opens out into a collection of echiums, it widens and disperses into meadow, leading the eye and the feet to softer ground that rolls downhill towards the ocean. Winding back around the house, through the dry garden, where orange-flushed succulents gather, another pebble path is embedded with ruddy flagstones. As it curves toward a gazebo, the pebbles vanish and the flagstones sink into grass. Further still, in the white-flowering moon garden, thyme between the stepping stones lends fragrance to the stroll. Later still, both scent and surface change beside rush-edged ponds as the walk becomes a fresh bed of bark chips.





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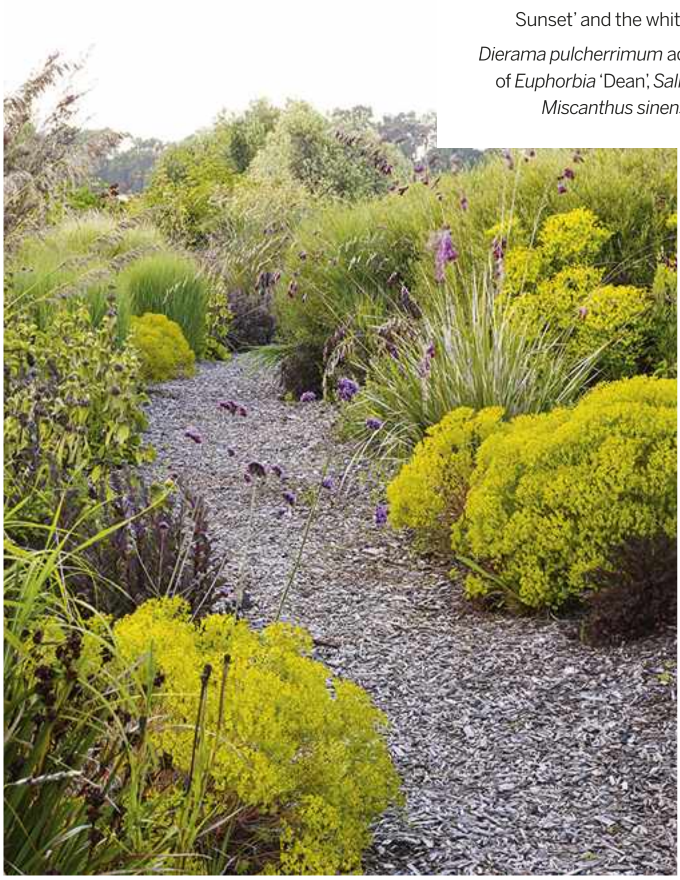
A mass of colour surrounding an olive tree greets visitors staying in the guest house. Plants include the orange-tinged *Leucospermum* 'Spider' and the pale greens of *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii*.

Both the pink-purple *Teucrium* x *lucidrys* and the rich-green *Muhlenbergia dubia* that edge this curving brick path are ideal plants for the garden's dry climate.

The ranch's chicken coop is almost hidden among a mass of plants including *Stipa gigantea*, *Phlomis fruticosa* and in the foreground *Kniphofia* 'Bees' Sunset' and the white *Libertia grandiflora*.

Dierama pulcherrimum adds a hint of pink to a froth of *Euphorbia* 'Dean', *Salix purpurea* 'Gracilis' and *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light'.



Carex pansa softens the edges of the paving slabs on this path through an avenue of tall *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' and *Miscanthus giganteus* 'Little Big Man', while *Rosa* Flower Carpet Red Velvet (= 'Noare') adds colour.

▷ the trade. She had read about a California nurseryman, John Greenlee, who had made them his speciality. Stephanie invited John to her ranch and they spent a few days choosing and laying out sedges, rushes and prairie natives. Among her favourites are the *Stipa gigantea* she calls her "gateway plant", for its towering presence at several transitions, and *Carex arenicola* subsp. *pansa*, which hosts a meadow of sparky daffodils in spring.

Soon, however, she began to thirst for stranger and more "magical" plants than the dynamic grasses – "I got bored," she says. While visiting the University of California's botanical gardens, she discovered a group of Southern Hemisphere plants – Australian cone-bearing banksias, South African leucospermums and leucodendrons – and bought some, tucking them in among the cottage roses, lilies and verbena around her house. Not only did they shine in the mix but, hailing from similar climates to that of California, they passed her toughness test.

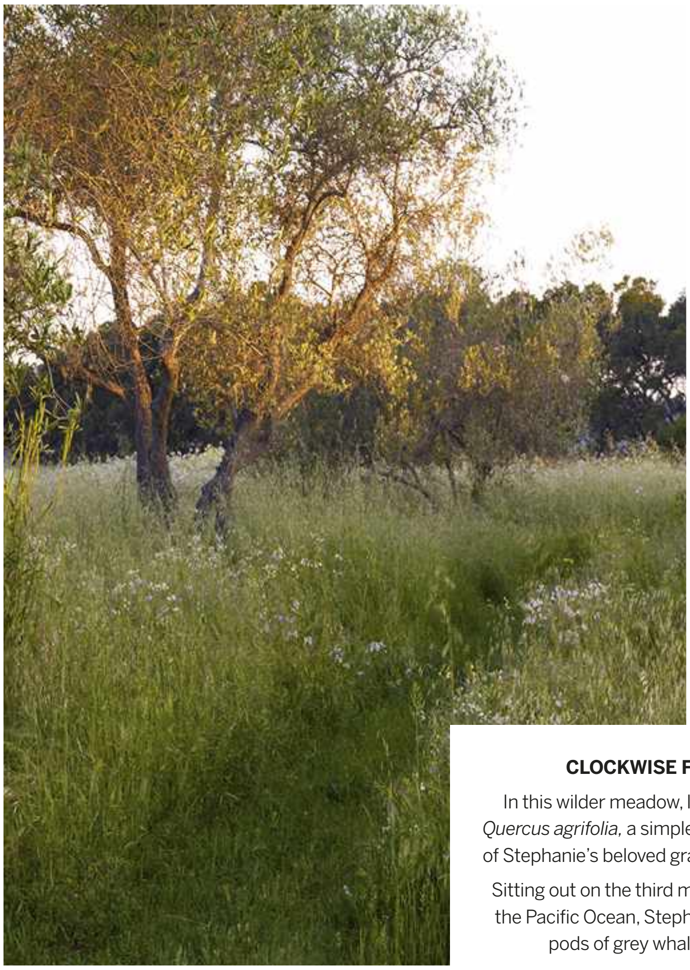
In the same experimental spirit, she planted an ocean-view garden with blue-flowering, Mediterranean echiums. She tried rush-like restios beside her ponds and apple trees in a secluded spot nearby. The restios grew into giants; the apples languished and died in heavy clay soil. But even the failure led to a breakthrough. One night, after preparing for another try by mounding beds with compost-enhanced soil to boost drainage, she enjoyed the light of a full moon. "Suddenly," she says, "I had a picture of a 'moon' garden, with plants, white-blooming and reflective or fragrant at night – clematis, viburnum, heliotrope, jasmine."

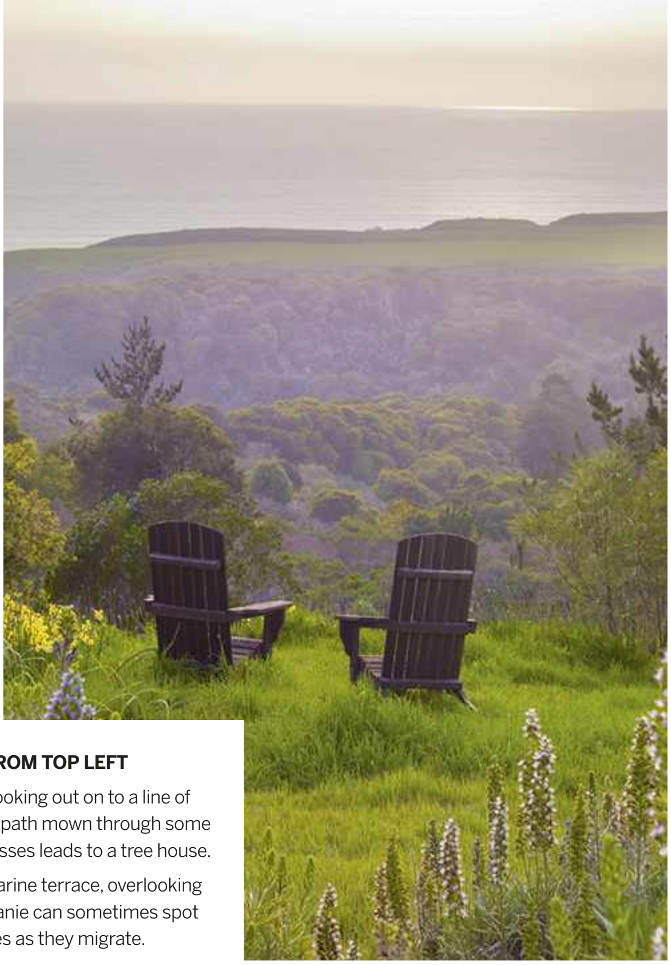
Serendipity struck again when Stephanie met garden designer David LeRoy at a local nursery in 1997. Smitten by the same brightly coloured, sculptural specimens, the pair immediately clicked. LeRoy's ideas and drawings allowed Stephanie to "execute the pictures in my head". He seized on her ideas for a succulent garden, made another stab – this time successful – at planting an orchard and created a new area for Stephanie's grandchildren to enjoy.

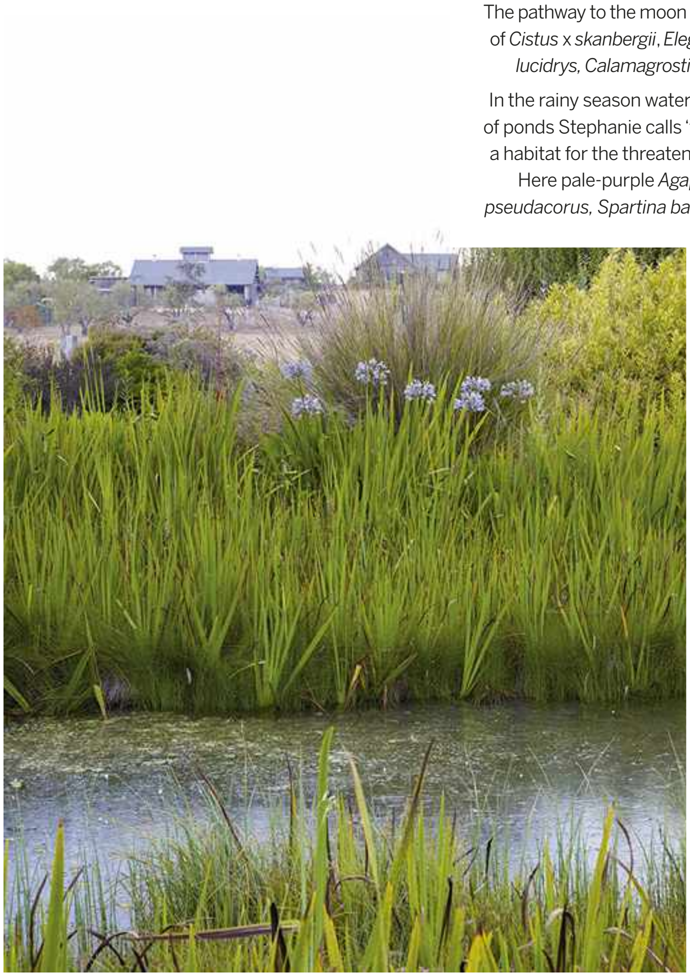
> *"Gardens are dynamic and so are we. All that occurs in our own lives – dormancy, growth, fruition, change – is echoed in the garden"*

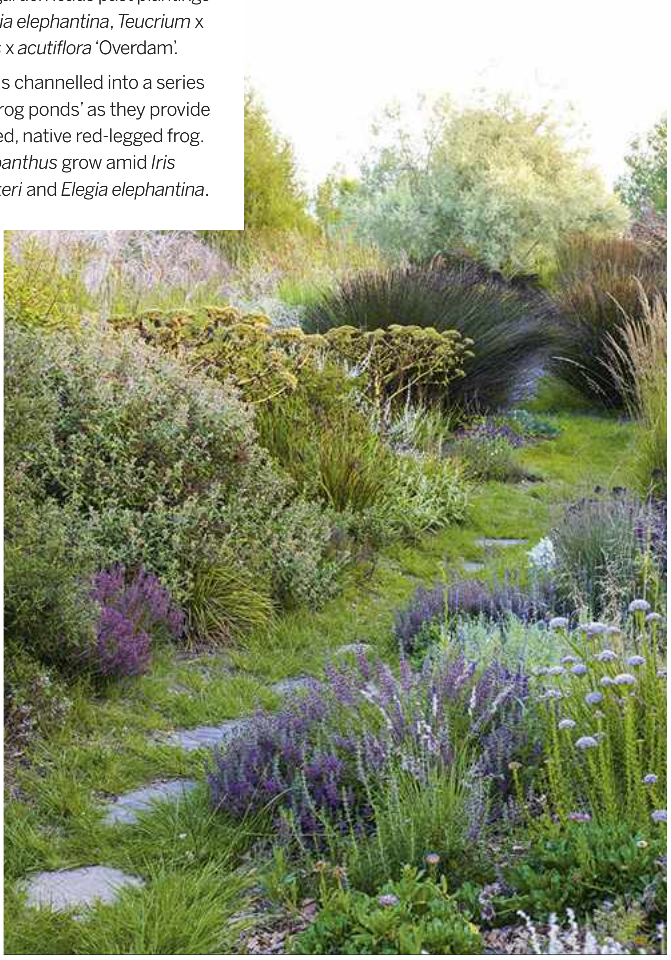
Two years later, Stephanie hired John Farrell, a former University of California garden manager, to oversee her ranch. Despite its gradual evolution and the distinct character of its many gardens, they have unfolded harmoniously, linked, like a novel's meandering plot, by thematic threads: grass and stone paths, a palette of sunshine reds, oranges and golds, a selection of backbone plants – mounding euphorbias, splayed grasses, torch-like leucospermums – that recur in different areas.

But for Stephanie, it is the landscape's flux that keeps it vital. "Gardens," she says, "are dynamic and so are we. All that occurs in our own lives – dormancy, growth, fruition, change – is echoed in the garden." □









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In this wilder meadow, looking out on to a line of *Quercus agrifolia,* a simple path mown through some of Stephanie's beloved grasses leads to a tree house.

Sitting out on the third marine terrace, overlooking the Pacific Ocean, Stephanie can sometimes spot pods of grey whales as they migrate.

The pathway to the moon garden leads past plantings of *Cistus* x *skanbergii*, *Elegia elephantina*, *Teucrium* x *lucidrys, Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Overdam'.

In the rainy season water is channelled into a series of ponds Stephanie calls 'frog ponds' as they provide a habitat for the threatened, native red-legged frog. Here pale-purple *Agapanthus* grow amid *Iris pseudacorus, Spartina bakeri* and *Elegia elephantina*.

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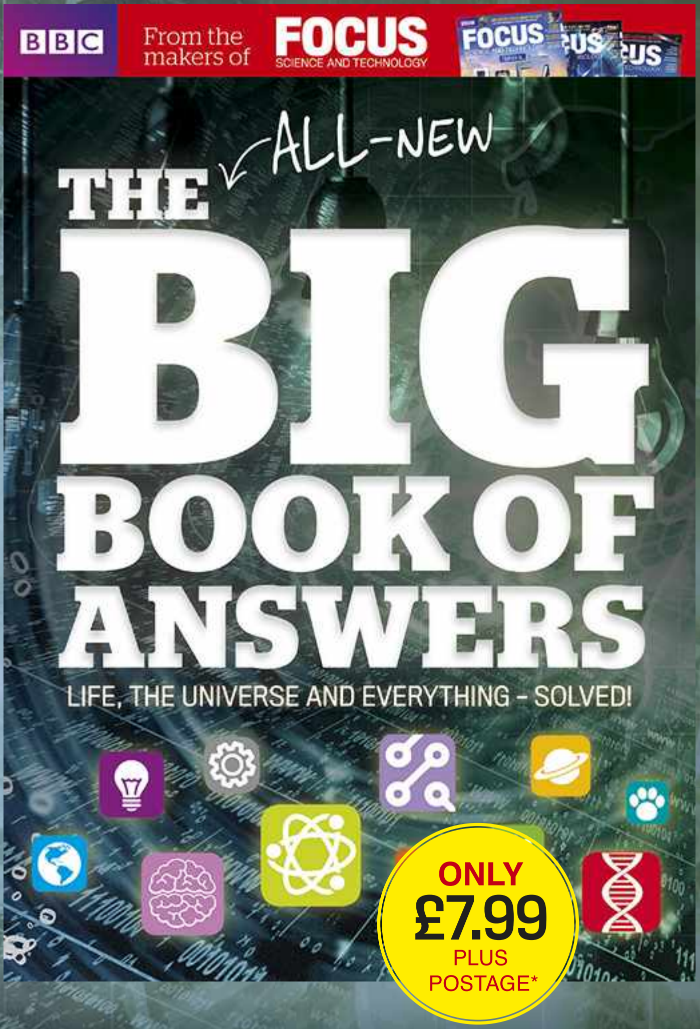
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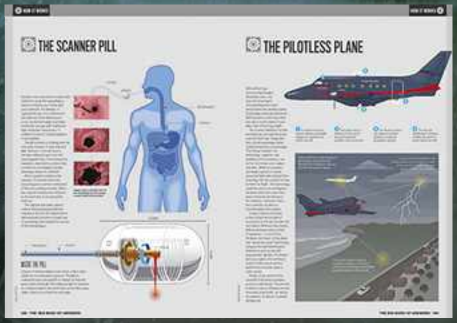
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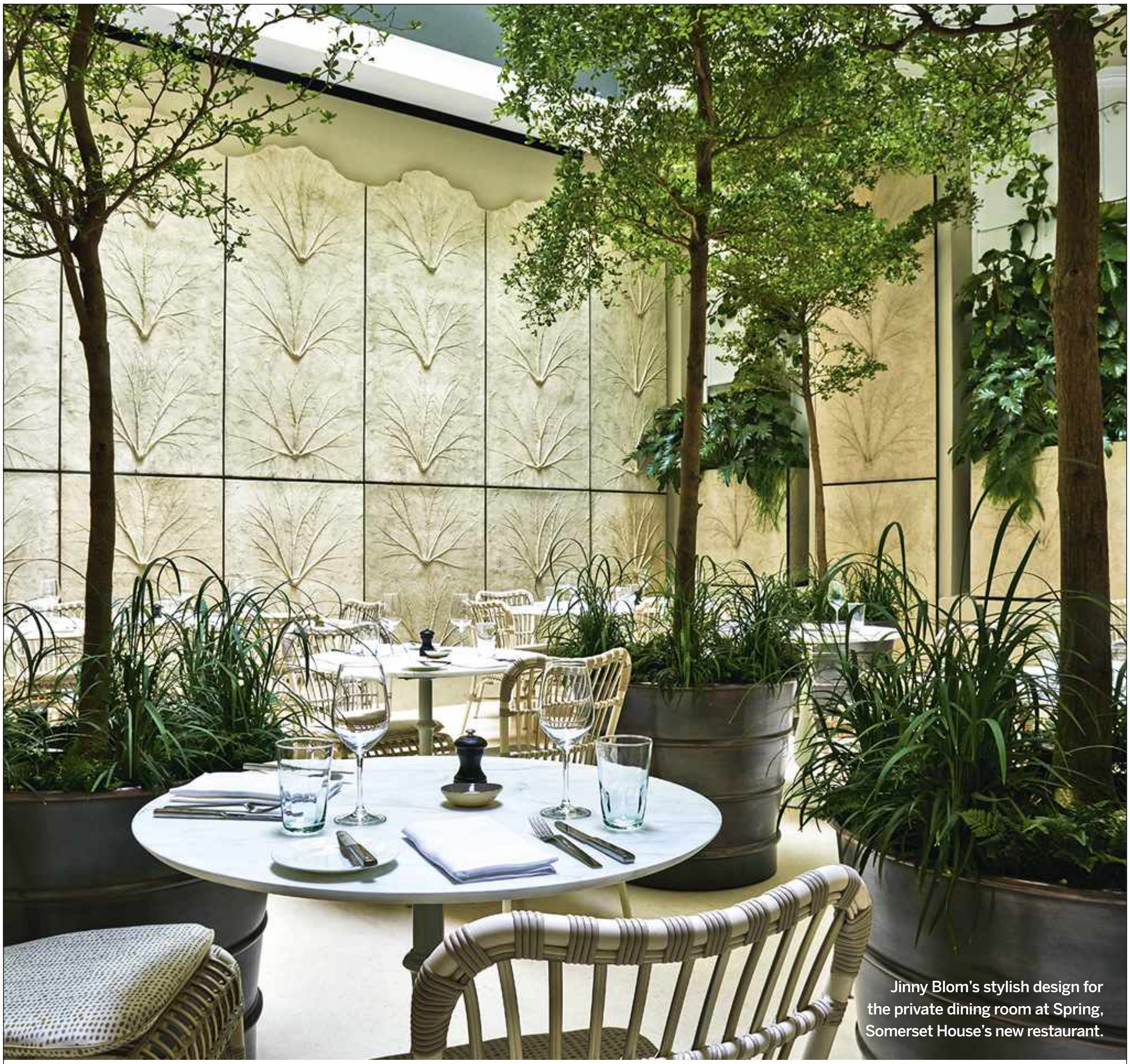
design

Design update, trend forecast and sourcebook

UPDATE COMPILED BY **ANNIE GATTI**



Jinny Blom's stylish design for the private dining room at Spring, Somerset House's new restaurant.

TOM MANNION

NEW RESTAURANT

Tasteful design

At the heart of Spring – Australian chef Skye Gyngell's new London restaurant in Somerset House – designer Jinny Blom has created a stunning courtyard garden in a new atrium. By using a restrained palette of cast marble and bronze, Jinny has given the light-filled space a sense of antiquity, notably in the striking wall panels, which feature *Gunnera manicata* leaves that Jinny hand cast in marble dust and framed in bronze. Large, bronzed floor planters hold evergreen *Bucida buceras* trees underplanted with *Liriope* and *Davallia mariesii*, while the cast marble and bronze planters set into alcoves are planted with *Philodendron xanadu*, the vine *Tetrastigma voinierianum* and the dangling cactus *Rhipsalis baccifera*. Spring, Somerset House, New Wing, Lancaster Place, London WC2R 1LA. **Tel 020 3011 0115, springrestaurant.co.uk**

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NATURAL POND

Making waves

The King's Cross development is becoming ever greener with the addition of a natural swimming pond designed by French architects Ooze in collaboration with artist Marjetica Potrc. The 40m pond, which will be raised 2m above ground level, will be chemical free and planted with marginal species that evolve as the seasons change. It's due to open in the spring as a swimming club. Designer Dan Pearson is also extending the area's park spaces with his design for a short viaduct. This will be divided by hedges into a series of planted areas in fiery and dark colours that make a visual link to the area's former use as a coal yard. **kingscross.co.uk**

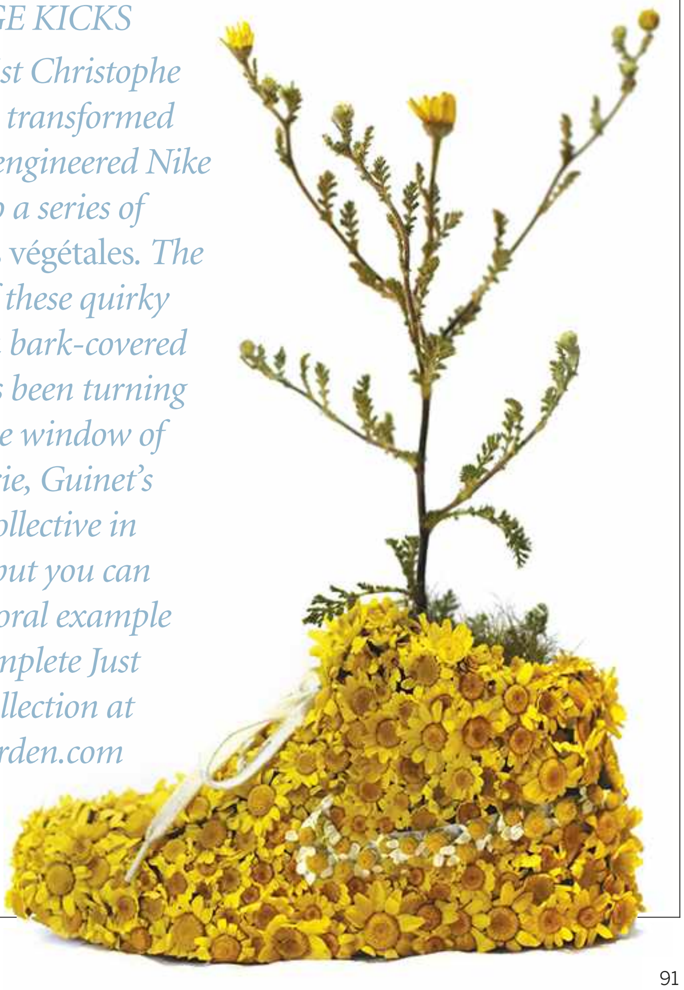
PARK ON THE ROCK

Growing freely

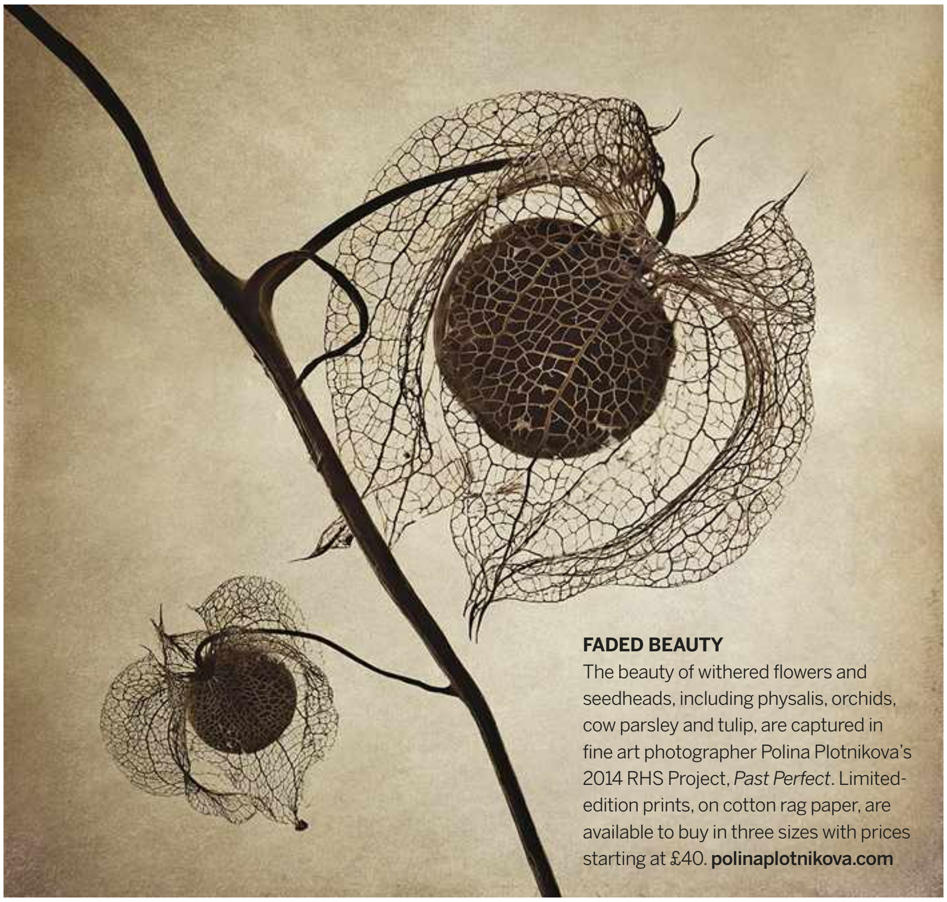
The site of the former prison on Alcatraz Island, San Francisco Bay, is now alive with colour thanks to a ten-year restoration project led by the Garden Conservancy, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and National Park Service. The project has introduced new, low-maintenance plants, similar in type, scale and colour to the historic plantings on the 'rock', some of which survived the 40 years of neglect after the prison closed. **alcatrazgardens.org**

GREENAGE KICKS

French artist Christophe Guinet has transformed the highly engineered Nike trainer into a series of chaussures végétales. *The sturdiest of these quirky artworks, a bark-covered trainer, has been turning heads in the window of Seize Galerie, Guinet's designers collective in Marseille, but you can view this floral example and the complete Just Grow It! collection at epiphytegarden.com*



NEIL SUTHERLAND / THE GARDEN COLLECTION; MONSIEUR PLANT REPRESENTED BY SEIZE



FADED BEAUTY
The beauty of withered flowers and seedheads, including physalis, orchids, cow parsley and tulip, are captured in fine art photographer Polina Plotnikova's 2014 RHS Project, *Past Perfect*. Limited-edition prints, on cotton rag paper, are available to buy in three sizes with prices starting at £40. **polinaplotnikova.com**

ECO PAINTS

Kings of colour

Interiors company Konig Design has launched a new range of non-toxic paints in a wide choice of colours. The high resin count in Konig Colours' water-based acrylic paint gives a smooth finish with just a couple of coats, and it is remarkably quick drying. See the full range at Nina Campbell, 9 Walton Street, London SW3 2JD and at **konigcolours.co.uk**

SGD SHORTLIST

Community prize

Three gardens have been shortlisted for the 2014 Society of Garden Designers Designing for Community Space Award: Willow Wood Hospice garden in Ashton-under-Lyne (pictured), by Sophie Cordingley; the courtyard garden at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital, London, by Annie Chapman of Verde Landscape Designed; and Tufnell Park Infants Playground, by Jackie Herald. This is the only category open to non-members of the SGD. The winner will be announced on 30 January. **sgdawards.com**

Notebook

- Book now for the **Garden Museum Spring Visit** on 16 April. This year the garden will take in three gardens in Oxford including the little-known Beckley Park with three moats, topiary and a contemporary garden. gardenmuseum.org.uk
- Another April date for your diary is the new **GARDENS ILLUSTRATED Festival**. A celebration of gardens, gardening, plants and design, it takes place in and around the Abbey Cloister Gardens in Malmesbury, Wiltshire, 17-18 April. Find out more and book tickets now at gardensfestival.com
- Learn more about the work of celebrated Dutch designer and plantsman **Piet Oudolf** in an online video of a lecture by Noël Kingsbury. Noël was speaking at Hauser & Wirth gallery in Bruton, Somerset, site of Piet's latest garden. You can see the video of Noël's talk at: bit.ly/1FOvZY3
- Discover the little-known garden of the vanished Queen Dowager's House in Hammersmith at garden historian David Marsh's lecture **Fit For A Queen** on 12 January. The garden was acquired by Catherine of Braganza, consort of Charles II, after Charles's death in 1685. London Parks & Gardens Trust, 77 Cowcross Street, EC1M 6EL. londongardenstrust.org
- Visit the **Lost Gardens of Heligan** on New Year's Day to raise money for local charities. The garden has recently won the European Garden Award 2014 in the European Garden Heritage Network Awards. heligan.com

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Planting & design trends
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JASON INGRAM, ANDREW MONTGOMERY, HOWARD SOOLEY, RACHEL WARNE

Design trends 2015

We asked ten key international garden designers what trends they see coming to the fore in the world of gardens and design for the year ahead

Isabelle Van Groeningen

Königliche Gartenakademie, Germany

The trend for grow-your-own as well as being properly self-reliant continues to rise in Germany. This ethos can be found in all types of garden and levels of society. From balcony boxes carrying prolific crops of old tomato cultivars, small gardens in garden colonies to community gardening projects as well as the finest urban gardens.

Ulf Nordfjell

Landscape architect, Sweden

Designers should focus more to develop their own ideas. The risk is that we will end up with an era of international gardens in all countries where all more or less look the same. It's encouraging to see that the use of Swedish materials, such as timber, granite and steel is growing, even if imported materials are cheaper.

Annie Guilfoyle

KLC School of Design

2015 is the year to 'big up' shrubs. For too long the emphasis has been on perennials and grasses and wonderful as they are, I think we need to focus more on shrubs and get them back into our gardens. Delve deeper into the nursery catalogues and get creative with the more unusual, as well as the forgotten treasures.

Adam Frost

Garden designer

I think the developing recognition that gardening is great for health will see horticultural therapy come to the fore. As for design work, clients seem to want more from their gardens so they not only look great, but are places to stop, connect with nature and spend time gardening with the family. Last but not least I hope gardening finally becomes trendy to the younger generation.

There is a trend back to softer, more organic lines, moving away from the overuse of vast soulless rectangles of concrete and stone, which once suggested success but now suggest ostentation.

Jo Thompson

Garden designer

I think that to design simply for aesthetics is not enough by itself. I would love if people would start to think of more than just beauty in their projects. We must focus on how nature gives us gifts that we can eat, drink, smell, feel and learn. We need to see and understand that nature is not just for beauty – it is for an experience.

Teresa Moller

Landscape designer, Chile

Most clients are beginning to understand visual language and are becoming more involved in the design process. Much of this comes from the desire to understand what they are spending their money on. The designer needs to prove himself or herself to the client who now wants to know how a designer thinks and works.

Andrew Duff

Inchbald School of Design

London Mayor Boris Johnson's 100 London 'pocket parks', with funky paint colours and edible greenery, will spread to other grey town areas. Planting trends see a return to unfashionable former favourites in new colours, such as the gladioli 'Black Jack' and 'Limoncello' seen at Gravetye Manor in Sussex.

Rosemary Alexander

Principal, English Gardening School

The basis for successful garden and landscape design is the understanding and realisation of spatial composition and structure. A well put-together design forms the backbone of any garden and will stand the test of time irrespective of style.

Robin Templar Williams

Garden and landscape designer

IN	OUT
Rural styling	Uber-cool contemporary
Heathland	Coastal
Electric daisies	Rainbow vegetables
Structural shrubs with grasses	Single species grass planting
Bulb meadows	Perennial meadows
Rusty reds	Blushing pink
Dipping pools and saunas	Pergolas and arbours
GPS-guided hedge cutting	Statement lighting

Andrew Fisher Tomlin

London School of Garden Design

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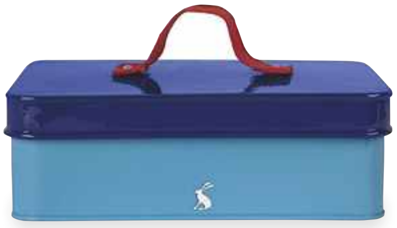

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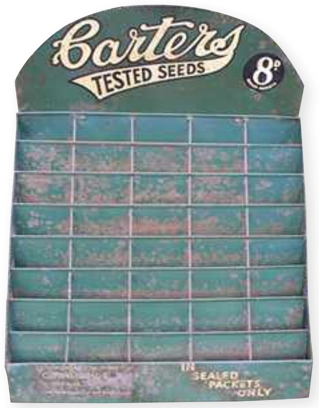
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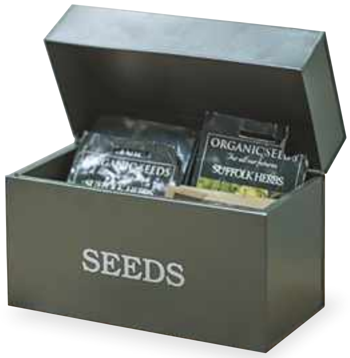

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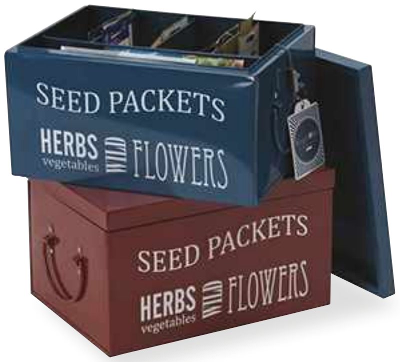
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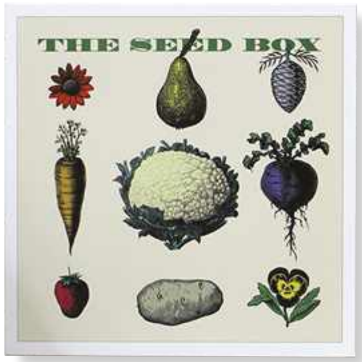
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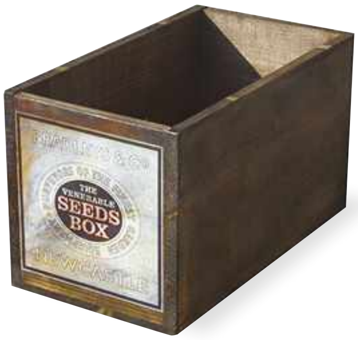
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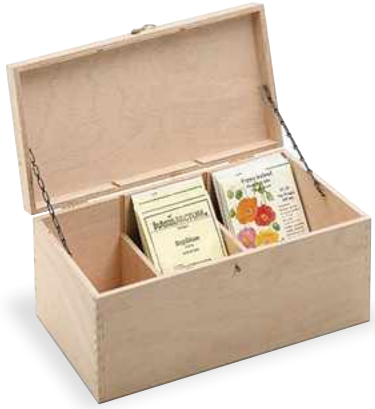

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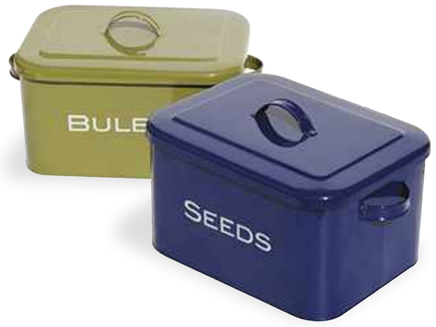
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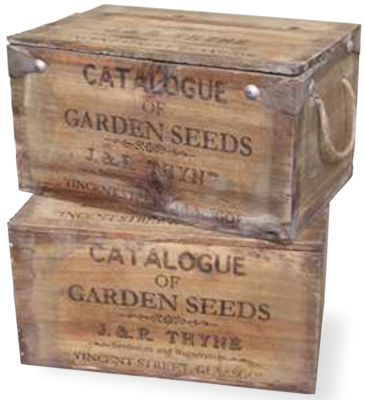
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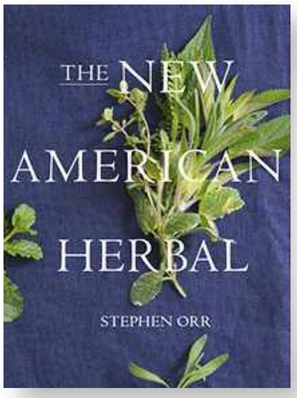
Downtools

Book reviews, reader offers, crossword

GEMMA AND ANDREW INGALLS

Discover the gardens of New Jersey, America's most densely populated state, in *Gardens of the Garden State* by Nancy Berner and Susan Lowry, reviewed on page 101.

Book reviews



THE NEW AMERICAN HERBAL
by Stephen Orr

Crown Publications, £22.50
ISBN 978-0449819937

A fresh, stylish and modern compendium on cultivating herbs in America for healthy eating – with stunning photographs.

Reviewer Alys Fowler is a gardener, author and Guardian *columnist.*

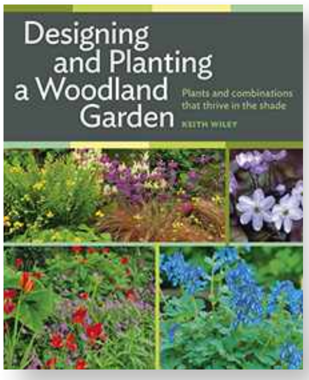
As the name suggests, this is clearly a book aimed at our cousins across the Atlantic and with it a whole suite of long-hot-summer-loving herbs. The first flick has the seasoned gardener left a little envious at what guaranteed sun gives you. Once you've overcome the green-eyed monster you can lust over the lovely photography. This is a handsome book and any sense that herbals are stuffy, 'ye-olde-world' compendiums with archaic advice for nervous types or strange ailments is straight out the window. This herbal is full of beautifully crafted images and fine, tempting recipes because the new health god is all about food as medicine, although the emphasis of this book is firmly on gardening for the kitchen.

The book is largely arranged as an A to Z by common name. Before that, there's a guide to everything herbal, from emetics, febrifuges and galactagogues (promotes lactation in nursing, apparently – all good for Scrabble fans) to major families and organic compounds that flavour herbs. There's a good guide on how to harvest leaves, flowers and seeds, plus easy propagation. All the guides are brief, but better for it. This is sound advice in an easily accessible manner.

There's a delightful section on making preparations, including perfume from essential oils, that includes the sentence 'my goal is to smell like I just rolled around in a mossy forest'. I like this modern approach to herbals. It feels fresh and accessible. It doesn't assume you'll spend all day distilling essential oils but rather you'll probably buy them, without devaluing the process.

The advice is clear with good historical notes and details on who can and cannot use them. I have many herbals but few are regularly referenced. I'm sure this one will buck that trend.

Book offer
RRP £22.50 each. **Reader offer price £20** including p&p.



DESIGNING AND PLANTING A WOODLAND GARDEN: PLANTS AND COMBINATIONS THAT THRIVE IN THE SHADE
by Keith Wiley

Timber Press, £25
ISBN 978-1604693850

In a project that's not for the faint-hearted author Keith Wiley creates a woodland garden at Wildside from a bare field.

Reviewer Rosemary Alexander runs the English Gardening School.

The author Keith Wiley, known for his naturalistic work at the Garden House in Devon, has spent the past ten years creating a garden and nursery down the road at Wildside, transforming a cider orchard into a new garden with spots for woodland plants.

The first part of the book describes the techniques used to turn this south-facing field without any shade into a woodland garden, defining 'woodlanders' as any plant that will grow and flower happily in a semi-shady site without looking incongruous. Wiley uses his 40 years of growing experience to discuss the varied factors affecting how much shade is needed.

A chart details the varying leafing out times of deciduous trees, which will affect the balance of sunlight to shade, and divides up into eight groups their different perennial growth habits, such as 'upright 'or 'low and spreading'. Wiley then covers shaping the land, both large and small spaces, and explains how, in contradiction, bulbs and other woodlanders such as *Saxifraga* can be used in grassy and sandy areas, plus weeding, irrigation and other maintenance. This is followed by diagrammatic plans demonstrating how a sizeable north-facing area at the base of a pergola can be planted to perform in all four seasons.

The second part of the book lists the criteria for plants mentioned by this much-travelled author, requiring that they must have two or more seasons of beauty. The easily imparted information, whether discussing *Daphne* or *Dicentra*, is hugely detailed and up to date. While US readers may be more familiar with the less well-known woodlanders, each plant is headed by the climatic zone, native region and growth habit. The book is worth buying for this section alone.

Book offer
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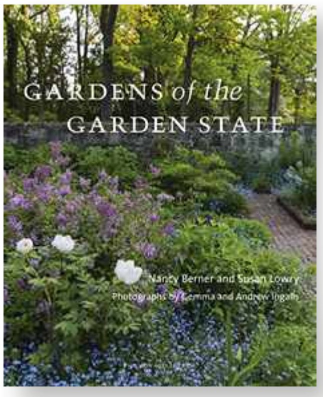

GARDENS of the
GARDEN STATE
Nancy Berner and Susan Lowry
Photographs by Gemma and Andrew Ingalls

GARDENS OF THE GARDEN STATE

by Nancy Berner and Susan Lowry

Monacelli Press, £40
ISBN 978-158093374

A beautifully illustrated book profiling a diverse range of gardens in New Jersey, a state with varied geography and climate.

Reviewer Graham Rice is a garden writer and author.

New Jersey is known as 'The Garden State' not for its overabundance of private and public gardens but for its impressive commercial production of blueberries, cranberries, peaches and vegetables. If, however, its ornamental horticulture was the reason for the name it would be well deserved, as this beautifully illustrated book about the gardens of the most densely populated state in the USA reveals.

A short overview and history of gardening and gardens in New Jersey precedes profiles on 31 gardens, accompanied by 200 photographs to show them off enticingly. The book reveals the wide range of gardens and shows how the varied climate (USDA 5b-7b), topography and soil conditions influences design and planting.

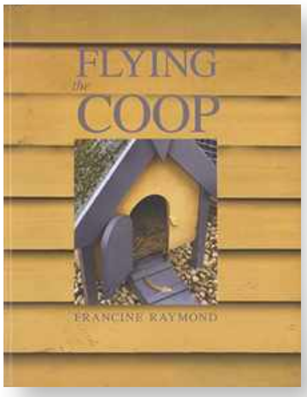
The impact of the gardens' designers is emphasised, especially that of those hired to develop estates for business people leaving New York City for more spacious New Jersey. Sweeping scale and specimen trees are significant features of many gardens – most are large by British standards. Edibles feature only occasionally.

I would have appreciated a more thorough analysis of each garden and its plants, to go with the fascinating summaries of the gardens' origins, along with more close-up shots of plantings to complement the preponderance of views and vistas. And an index.

Unfortunately, there is no indication of when, or even if, these gardens are open to the public and no guidance on how to find out. Inspired by this book, visitors to nearby New York City looking to visit these gardens will have some work to do. The Garden Conservancy (gardenconservancy.org) and Garden State Gardens (gardenstategardens.org) websites provide opening information for some.

Book offer

RRP £40. **Reader offer price £37** including p&p.



FLYING THE COOP

by Francine Raymond

Kitchen Garden, £22
ISBN 978-0956195234

Francine Raymond has moved from her beloved Suffolk to Kent and details how she gets to grip with a new home and garden.

Reviewer Juliet Roberts is editor of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED.

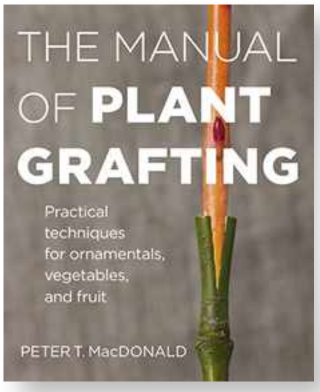
Moving house is never easy – and having once relocated five times in the space of seven years, I still feel pangs of anxiety at the very thought – so words of wisdom from a respected source are always welcome. In this, her fourteenth book, writer Francine Raymond (gardening columnist for *The Telegraph*, expert on hen keeping and home-grown style) charts the practicalities, apprehension and excitement of leaving her beloved Suffolk country home of almost 30 years and downsizing to start a new chapter of her life in the seaside town of Whitstable, Kent.

Written with rare candour and filled with diary-like entries in which she shares her day-to-day activities and emotions, the book follows Francine's pragmatic approach to living the 'good life' for as long as possible. Faced with the blank canvas of her new garden, Francine explains: 'Uppermost in my design is the determination not to lumber myself with too much work in the future… but I hope my garden will still be creatively productive, so I can treat myself and grow those little seasonal specialities that make life worth living: pots of early spring bulbs and bottles of elderflower cordial, pullet eggs and bowls of salad leaves, posies of flowers and bundles of kindling, baskets of fruit and jars of preserves in the larder.'

Generously illustrated with Vic Spoff's delightful images, which give an insight into Francine's style, the book is full of wise musings, practical gardening advice, ideas on what best to grow in reduced circumstances, as well as seasonal recipes, including such mouth-watering delights as celeriac and dried mushroom soup, rhubarb cheesecake and cobnut macaroons. My copy already has numerous scribblings in the margins and folded-down corners of pages that I want to return to.

Sorry, no offer on this title.

Book reviews


THE MANUAL OF PLANT GRAFTING
Practical techniques for ornamentals, vegetables, and fruit
PETER T. MacDONALD

THE MANUAL OF PLANT GRAFTING: PRACTICAL TECHNIQUES FOR ORNAMENTALS, VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

by Peter MacDonald

Timber Press, £25
ISBN 978-1604694635

> *This is not a book to hurry through but to return to again and again. It should become a classic of any potting shed.*

Reviewer Troy Scott Smith is head gardener at Sissinghurst.

How refreshing it is to come across a book that is clearly written by someone who knows their subject. The author sets out to present the principal practical techniques required to provide not only the amateur gardener with the confidence to give grafting a go but also offer the more experienced grower pointers to increase their grafting success rate.

The book begins with a chapter exploring the fascinating history of grafting – did you know, for instance, that the German-born physician Philipp Franz Von Siebold brought back the technique of chip budding from Japan? Further chapters discuss the various uses of grafting, choosing and production of scion and rootstock material, and different types of grafting, from the well-known and traditional whip-and-tongue technique to the more obscure and potentially difficult hole insertion method used for watermelons. The book ends with a short chapter considering the future of grafting, and the author advises critical observation and detailed questioning as keys to improving your success in grafting – good advice in all forms of gardening.

The best of the book, however, is saved for the 24-page appendix (where the author recommends techniques for over 200 plants), helpful glossary and well-documented references that, together with the structured writing throughout, are evidence of a skilled practitioner.

The book is highly accurate and packed with facts. Over 150 photographs accompany the text, which for the most part are clear and informative rather than attractive distractions. Simple line diagrams offer more visual instruction and are used to good effect.

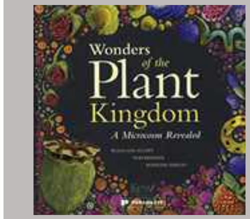
In summary, this is an extraordinarily comprehensive book that admirably fulfils its aims and is well priced at £25.

Book offer

RRP £25. **Reader offer price £23** including p&p.

Other books

From the breathtakingly beautiful microcosm of plants to 100 recipe ideas for making floral wreaths and decorations



WONDERS OF THE PLANT KINGDOM

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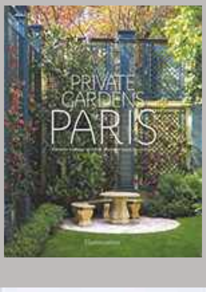
Papadakis, £19.99
ISBN 978-1906506476
Minutiae plant anatomy explained.



PRIVATE GARDENS OF PARIS

OFFER PRICE **£18.50**

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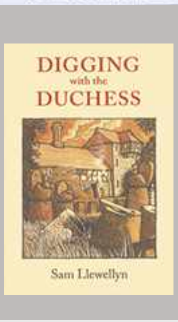
An inspiring guide to creating floral wreaths and decorations.



DIGGING WITH THE DUCHESS

by Sam Llewellyn
New Hat, £10
ISBN 978-0992768898
A collection of essays based on the garden of The Hope, an ancient house in the Welsh Marches.

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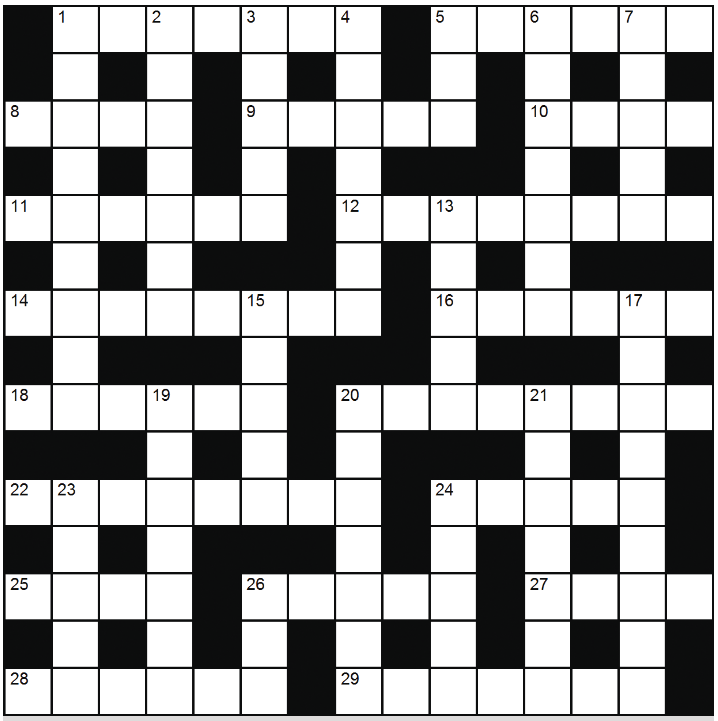

ACROSS

1 As dying leaves may do – turn silver, hard inside (7)

5 See 11 across

8 Tips I've removed from endives (4)

9 Raises plants – conferences and comices with new top? (5)

10 Downfall welcomed by gardeners? (4)

11/5 Apple tree pests – show lily pad distorted, nothing inside (6,6)

12 Leafy brassica also called kale (8)

14 Widen bed, possibly, for the *Convolvulus* (8)

16 Fertiliser ingredient from plant container by tree (6)

18 Japanese horseradish – partly grow as a biennial (6)

20 Moving out a mint for plant 'sport' (8)

22 Other name for Viper's bugloss – not much seen on Manx! (4-4)

24 As potpourri petals are – perished right inside (5)

25 Knock out part of robust undergrowth (4)

26 The very best… acer moved before start of May (5)

27 Spring flower also called flag (4)

28 Prickly shrubs ribs are endlessly broken (6)

29 Small bunch of fragrant flowers (7)

DOWN

1 Lavender cotton genus – second national variety (9)

2 Made crackling sound of dried leaves (7)

3 Every new legendary garden designer, Rosemary ___ (5)

4 It produces a non-flowering shoot (7)

5 Stupid person in glasshouse! (3)

6 Bean variety's rich oat mixture (7)

7 Sow seed in rows making doctor indisposed (5)

13 Put plant in another container (5)

15 I care about the heath genus (5)

17 Another name for gladiolus – silly word, anyway (5,4)

19 Genus of blue-flowering perennials – so a main rearrangement (7)

20 Plant in *Verbascum* genus, also called Aaron's Rod (7)

21 Coiling, like honeysuckle – almost nine inside twig (7)

23 Commonly called Michaelmas daisy (5)

24 Start to design some unusual plant houses at Eden Project (5)

26 Lettuce with crisp, narrow leaves (3)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD AND THE CHRISTMAS PRIZE CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

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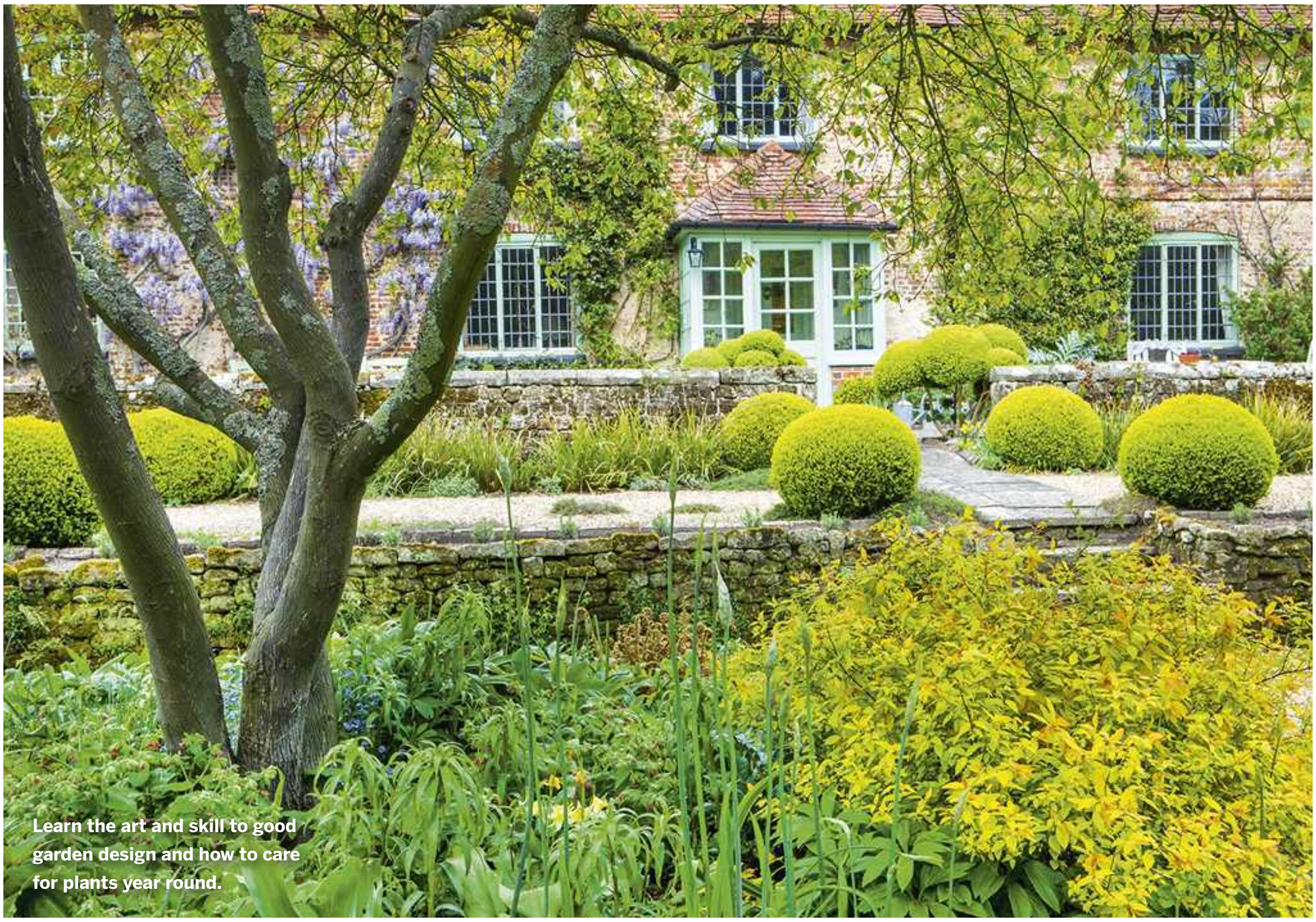

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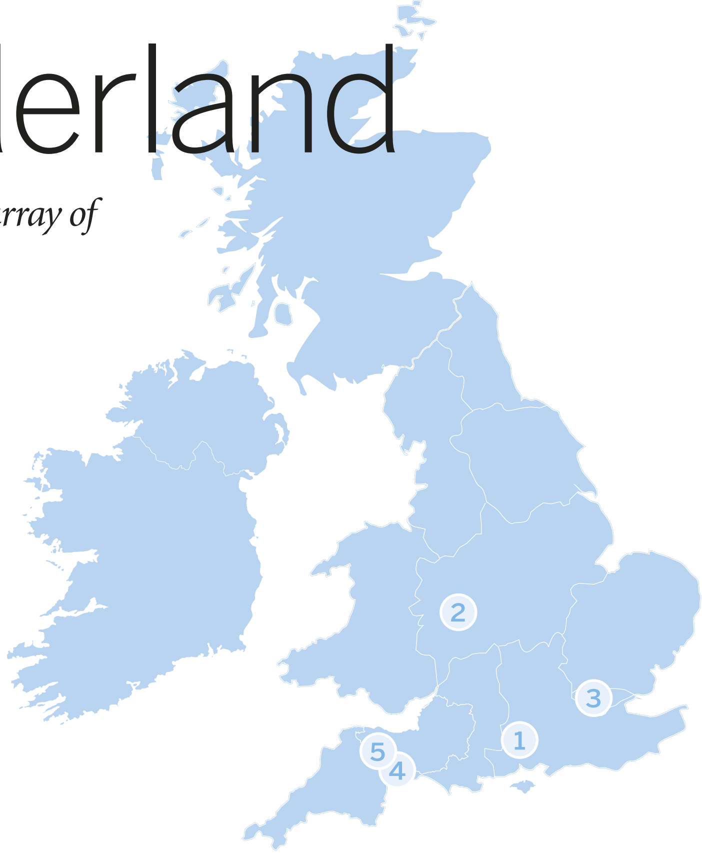

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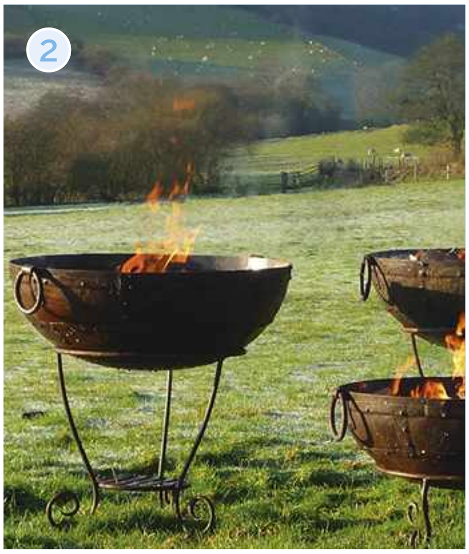

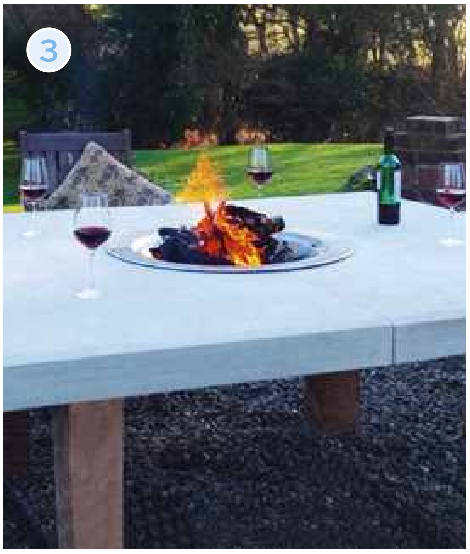

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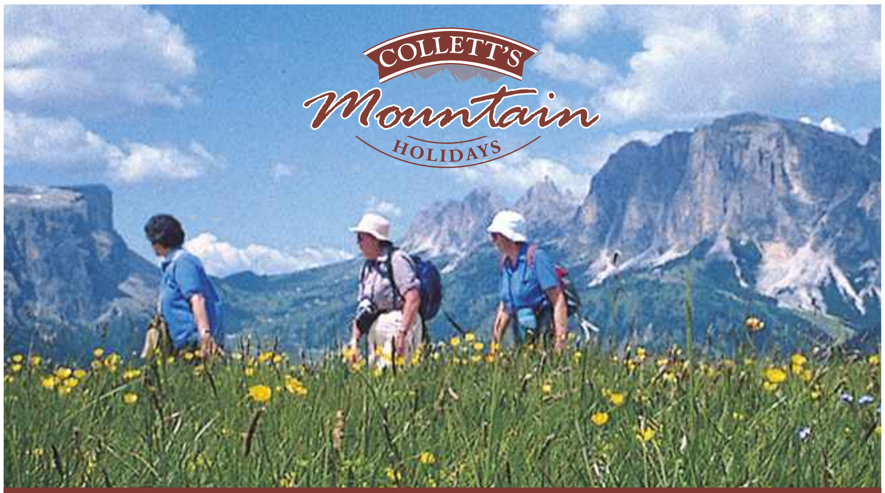
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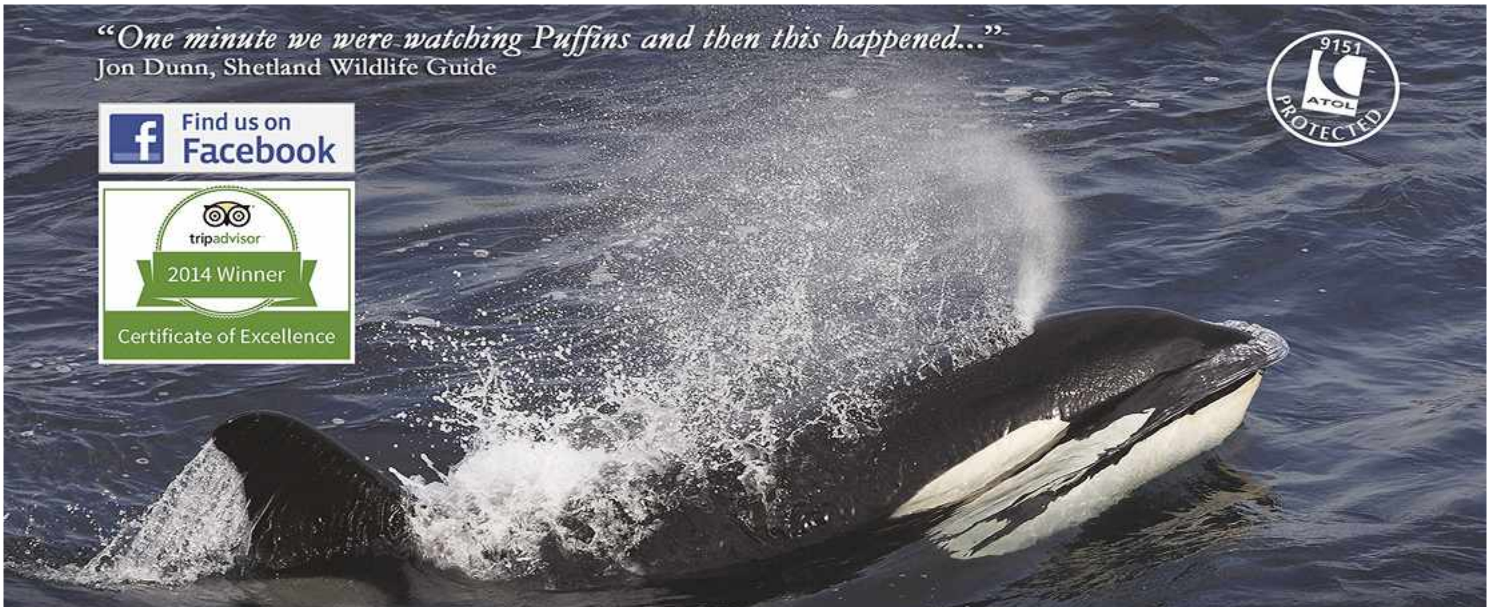
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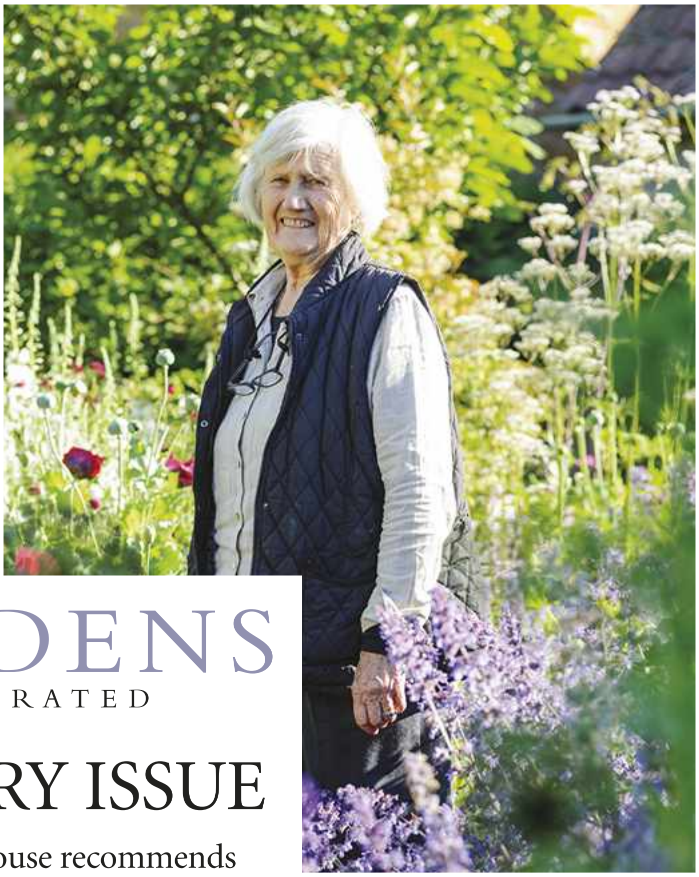

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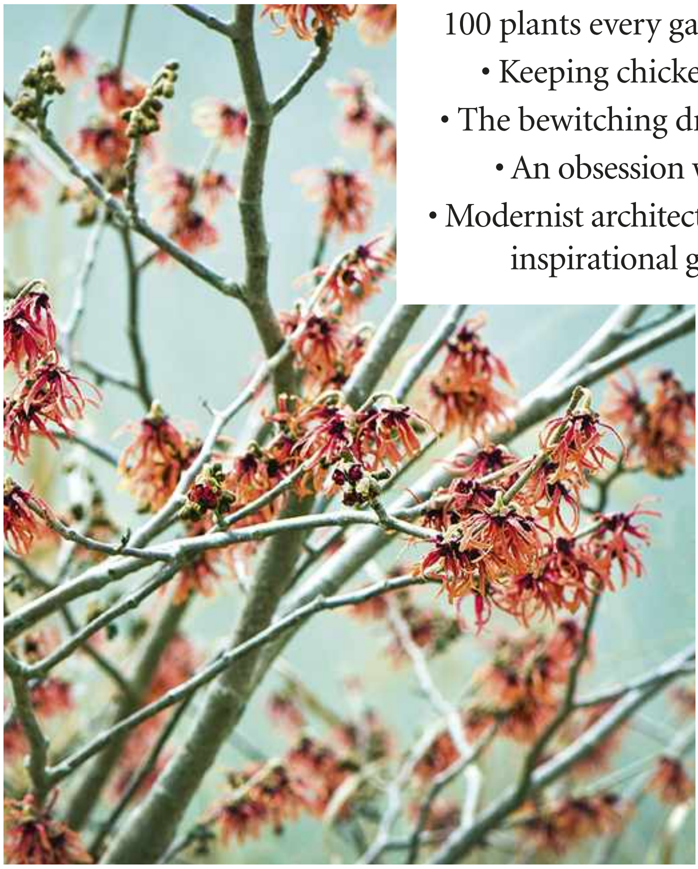
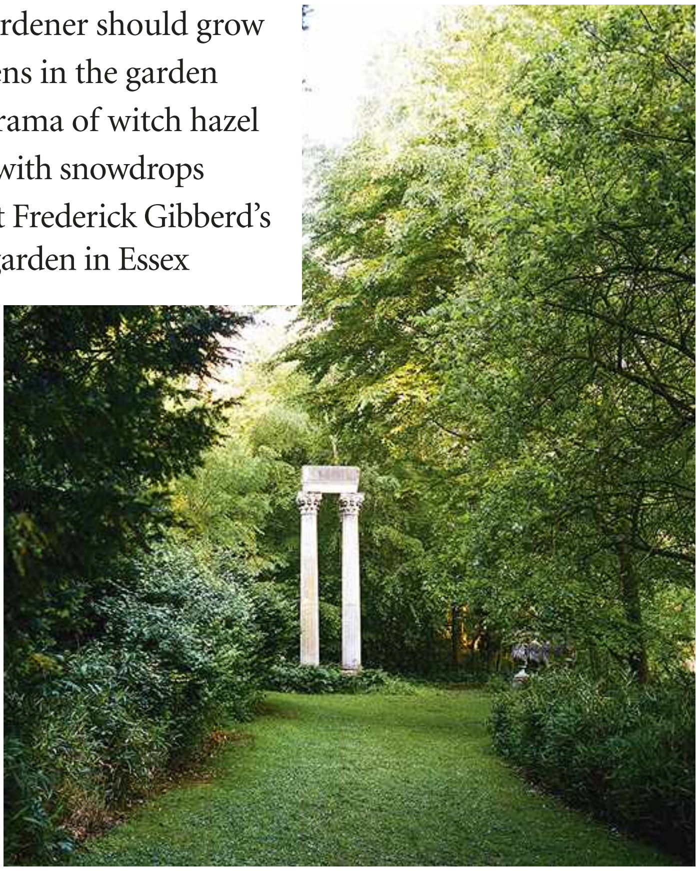
- Keeping chickens in the garden
- The bewitching drama of witch hazel
- An obsession with snowdrops
- Modernist architect Frederick Gibberd's inspirational garden in Essex





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A cut above

January offers Frank the opportunity to indulge in one of his favourite pastimes: pruning

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **ANGELA HARDING**

One of the most intense pleasures to be had is on a dry January day with a sharp pair of secateurs in your hand and a blackcurrant bush about your head. The blackcurrant is a fruit so infused with itself that even the leafless wood gives off the unmistakable scent, making it so pleasant to cut into that you have to restrain yourself from going too far. The blackest shoots will be the oldest, and so they are the ones that need to come out to make room for the next generation. Unless the bush has been neglected you shouldn't want to remove more than a third of it, and if that hasn't satisfied your nasal craving you can always break and twist the prunings all the way to the rubbish heap and walk in a blackcurrant effluvium.

Save big prunes for when you have time to get out ladders and a companion to phone for the ambulance

Pruning is such a delight anyway, particularly at this time of the year when you might only get a quarter of an hour outside. You can accomplish a lot in fifteen minutes of snipping and, unlike most January jobs, you won't need a bath afterwards. There are also big prunes, like the wisteria, for when you have time to get out the ladders and a companion to phone for the ambulance, but most things, like the blackcurrants, can be done on a hit and run basis and you can be back in the house before the cold penetrates the second knuckle.

Having said which, if you find pruning as addictive as I do, you'll be looking around for the next victim as soon as you have laid waste to the last one. The caveat with winter pruning is that it is more likely to encourage growth than that done in the summer months, so you'll want to keep away from your espaliers and cordons and anything else in which you are discouraging incontinent sprouting. For that reason also, you don't want to be raising your canopies, or parking out, as they call it in America, as doing it now will only lead to inelegant growth on the leg in the spring.

Neither should you be pruning your plums and cherries, which are prone to silver leaf and better able to heal their wounds in the summer months. Nor should you be removing growth from any shrub that might need it for protection with the worst of the winter likely to come. So March for the hydrangeas. That used to be the advice for roses also, but I think that was a rumour put about by the rose people to make their darlings seem more precious. I've always felt free to treat my roses at least as viciously as they treat me and they've never suffered for it.

It might be thought that pruning is full of rules and pitfalls, and I have several friends who never dare prune anything at all for fear of killing it. They in turn have other friends who visit them with joyful warcries and helpfully cut everything in sight to the ground, killing enough plants in the process to justify the original phobia. But the rules in fact are few and simple, and the only one that really matters is that you should look. If you have the intelligence to observe whether a plant flowers or fruits on new or old wood you will have a fair idea how to treat it. And because most of us need to have our memory jogged when staring at bare twigs, you will probably also have to look in a book. The good old *Reader's Digest Encyclopaedia* has an impeccable and pithy pruning guide at the back.

But meanwhile the scent of blackcurrants lingers in your nostrils, causing a craving that has to be satisfied. Luckily, last year's crop was so abundant that there is still a bottle and a half of crème de cassis waiting indoors. Essential, as the wise Jane Grigson said, 'to vary the boredom of daily champagne'. □

Frank Ronan is a novelist who gardens in both the UK and USA.

READER EVENT

Don't miss the chance to hear Frank speak at the GARDENS ILLUSTRATED Festival in April. For details see page 10 or visit **gardensfestival.com**

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